

Tapes: unknown (recording is missing)

Transcript of Interview with Euel Davis

Conducted by Cecil Roberts

October 15, 1996
and
October 18, 1996

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INTERVIEW WITH EUEL DAVIS

[Disclaimer: This interview has not been edited. Name and place spellings have not been confirmed. No acronyms are explained, nor any explanatory footnotes provided. There may also be portions of the interview that are incomplete because the transcriber could not understand what the speaker was saying.]

This is another in the series of BLM oral history interviews. The interviewee today is Mr. Euel Davis who retired from BLM some time ago. The interviewer is Cecil Roberts. The interview is being conducted in the Executive Conference Room of the BLM Applied Resource Sciences Center on the afternoon of October 15th, 1996.

[The first half of the interview takes place on October 15th, 1996; and the second half is recorded on October 18th, 1996].

CECIL: I guess that's enough introduction, Euel. Why don't you introduce yourself and tell us a little bit about your background.

EUEL: Okay. Well, I was born and raised in northern Wisconsin. In the early days just immediately after World War I, my father worked in the timber industry, a logger. He was a logger when they used nothing but horses, oxens, wagons, and sleds, no automotive equipment. My uncle at that time was a game warden for the state of Wisconsin. And so, I grew up in a family that was oriented towards natural resources in many respects. Lived and graduated from high school in a little town Niagara, Wisconsin. Then worked for a year in the Kimberly Clark Corporation paper mill there, where my father was employed full-time. Then went to Texas A&M College (my folks were both born and raised in Texas and on ranches). Spent about 8 months there and lo and behold here comes World War II. So went into the Army Corps of Engineers and went overseas and spent three years in Europe; then returned to the U.S. in 1945, I guess it was, yeah, when the war was over. During that period, I had run into some people that were interested in the same kind of things that I was interested, almost entirely forestry. And they had described to me the programs in Missoula, Montana, at the University of Montana. So, I applied to be accepted there as a

student under the GI Bill, went there and spent 4 years. The first summer, I got really involved in the natural resources program as a smoke jumper for the Forest Service. But then I went on and did the usual things in forestry school and got a degree, a Bachelor of Science in Forestry in 1949. Then with a scholarship at Texas A&M University for a Masters in Range Management. I had during my course in forestry become very interested in grazing because my parents were both involved in ranch work in their early years in Texas. After receiving my masters from Texas A&M, I came back up north to Wyoming. I should say that during the college years at the University of Montana, I worked during the summer for the Forest Service in various locations, had some outstanding experiences. One that I remember so vividly was the ranger and I, (he's retired now in his mid-80's up in Missoula, Montana) did most of our work on horseback because it was very rugged terrain. As we were coming off of the mountain one afternoon to the pickup truck where we had a pack mule tied inside of the pickup, there was a moose standing in a beaver pond, a big cow. -- And he said, let's rope her. So, we did, we really did. We both got our ropes on that critter, and she took off down the trail with us following her as fast as the horses would follow. -- And they did keep up with her. We got her down to the flat right by the pickup where we had our pack mule. We were going to put her in the pickup with the mule. -- And tried it and, of course, he proceeded to kick the sides off of the pickup box.

CECIL: The mule?

EUEL: The mule did, yeah, oh yeah. He wasn't having any part of that moose. So, we got a tow chain that we had in the pickup, and we hog tied that moose and we went back into town (Lima, Montana) a little bitty place in southwestern Montana. The next morning, we came back out with a local game warden. And she was still there. She had knocked down about an acre of sagebrush kicking around, trying to get up. And he put an ear tag on her for marking purposes. And then I put my son on her head. He was about 2 years old. He sat on her head, and I took a picture of them. So, there's proof that it wasn't just a big line of baloney. But then we took the cow chain off and tried to get the moose to stand up. Of course, she was stiff. I had a black cocker spaniel and I sicced the dog and he barked at

her. She still didn't get up. And finally, the game warden - had a red pickup - got in it and drove down there right by her, turned on the lights and honked the horn. She got up and proceeded to rear up on her hind legs and come down and broke both of his headlights. Then she took off cross country. And we never heard from her since. But, anyway, that was an interesting one there at Lima. Okay, then I went to Texas A&M, got my master's in range management, and came back to work for BLM. And the first place I started was over at Lander, Wyoming, as an assistant.

CECIL: When was that, Euel?

EUEL: Well, let's see, would have to had been about 1951, worked there for about a year. The District Manager there at the time was old Lester Brooks, we called him. (I found out later that his name was Luster, L U S T E R Brooks.) And the assistant there was Joe Bagley. He was part Indian, real fine guy. We called him Eagle Eye because he could see better with his naked eyes than we could with binoculars.

CECIL: And what was your job?

EUEL: Oh, just doing range work. I say range work, some range assessment work, putting in some little exclosures, recording the plants that were there and the size and the area that they occupied. It was usually a one-acre exclosure. And then we did some work with water control, putting in some small dams, primarily I suppose for livestock water. But also, because there was quite a bit of flooding out in the area east of Lander because of over grazing, out towards and south of Casper, Wyoming.

CECIL: How many people were in the office at that time, do you remember?

EUEL: I think there were five or six. There was Lester Brooks (District Manager), Bill Vaughn (Watershed Specialist), a

range and improvement maintenance man, Joe Bagley, and Jack Darham was there at first when I was there, a good friend of mine. We went to the University of Montana together. Oh, we had an administrative assistant too.

CECIL: And a District clerk, did you have?

EUEL: Well, he was the administrative assistant, kind of the clerk too.

CECIL: Okay.

EUEL: So, there weren't too many people there, but we felt there were plenty to do what we needed to do. And then I moved over to White Hall, Montana. And that would have been in about 1954. And at that time, it was at White Hall, and I thought, always thought it was a District Office. But checking it out here just recently, I find that it wasn't. The District Office was in Butte, Montana. I still can't quite figure it out. Anyways, we worked out of White Hall. The BLM lands were east and north of Butte, Montana, over in the Big Hole, Montana, country down along the Beaverhead River, down south of Dillon; over on the plateau between Lima, Montana, and the Madison River (which incidentally was prior to the earthquake that made the dam there in the Madison River and backed up the water (Quake Lake). And there's still a dam (Hebgen Dam) there. We did the usual range work, checking on the number of livestock and how the grazing was going, the impact of grazing on the vegetation. Quite a bit of trespass work because there was a lot of people that thought it was their own land that they could do as they wanted to. That hasn't changed much as I understand it. But I can remember one particular occasion that was very revealing to me at that time. It was, I think, very important to my career. Do what you were told was right, what you'd been trained to do regardless of the circumstances. And I remember one time we were out there near the Madison River, south of Ennis, up on the flat highland country, west of West Yellowstone. We ran into this rancher who had a bunch of trespass horses up there. My boss, Fred Benson, wrote him a trespass notice on the spot because a lot of times, you'd send those by registered mail, and

they'd refuse to accept them. This guy was riding horseback, and he had a rifle; he said to Fred, you know, I could use this to change your opinion. And Fred said, it don't make any difference; you get rid of me and there'll be another one come. We're endless. And so, I figured if Fred could set that kind of an example, I could be pretty hardnosed about things too. And I became that way. Of course, my father was a very strict man and disciplinarian, and I had a lot of respect for people that are older than I was, whatever their age. And their training and outlook on things and if they were my boss, I accepted what they said. Well, anyways, worked there at for White Hall for maybe a year and a half. A fantastic area. I really enjoyed it immensely. Virginia City, Montana, the old gold mines, and the dredging things that went on there. And over near Dillon and down near Lima, Montana, on the Beaverhead River, all of the good things. I fished in that Beaverhead River and caught, what's the name of the fish that have those big high fins. It's a trout river but these were grayling. And enjoyed it immensely. There were a lot of fires in that area. We'd have to go into Dillon into the bars and pick up people to go out on the fires because we didn't have enough people. And we didn't have much equipment. We just had a few polaskies and shovels. But we managed to get along pretty well there. After about a year there, I went back to Washington, DC, with the BLM on a training session and was there about 6 months working out of the Washington Office; odds and ends of different parts of the organization back there to become more familiar with how the front office operated.

CECIL: Do you remember what they called that program?
Something like the Middle Management Training Program?

EUEL: That was it, I think.

CECIL: Something like that?

EUEL: Yeah. Don Scofield went there a year before I did. He was a District Manager out in Oregon. He and I went to college together also at Missoula. And I can't remember off hand who others were. The names escape me right now. But

anyways, that was a pretty interesting 6 months. I got exposed to a lot of the stuff that goes on in Washington, DC. Didn't understand the necessity of it then any more than I do now. But anyways, when I finished that period, I was transferred back out West. And was set up as the District Manager in Pinedale, Wyoming.

CECIL: Go back to Montana for a second. Did you have much involvement with Advisory Boards in Montana?

EUEL: Well, not much. Enough that I became aware of you know what. Of course, I saw that operating over in Lander, Wyoming, too, when I first was there because we were allowed to sit in on Advisory Board meetings and kind of get acquainted with those kind of people. And this is really interesting because some of the background that I have is ranching and one of my great uncles was a rancher down here in southwestern Colorado, near Durango. The feedback that I get, although I never went on his ranch at that time, is that he was a very poor land manager. He overgrazed everything like most everybody else did down there then. But anyways, I had no difficulty with the Advisory Board. I thought that they were pretty fair people that I worked with. I was a little bit surprised that the Advisory Board was constituted almost a hundred percent with grazing people, you know, ranchers. Later that changed a little bit anyways. They got wildlife people on. And now I understand that it's a much, much different content of expertise in the advisory boards. They got along pretty well with the District Manager both at Lander and at White Hall. Next, we moved to Pinedale, Wyoming.

CECIL: About when?

EUEL: Let me see. Probably about '54, '53 or '54. One of the first things that happened in Pinedale, unless you've been there it's hard to imagine how small it is -- a very small community. I don't think there were more than two or three hundred people there except in the summertime, quite a bit of people came up and spent the summer. Burt Silcock was there and Jack Wilson was there before me. Burt and then following him

was Jack Wilson and then I followed Jack into Pinedale. And there was no house, at least that I could afford or was even available. So, down near LaBarge, Wyoming, on the Green River, just north of the Wyoming line, the BLM (the Grazing Service, I suppose) built a fire lookout up on top of the mountain. It hadn't been used for many years. Nor idea that we would ever use it again. So, one of the guys and I got a ton and half truck and tore it down. Actually, we pushed it over and got the walls and roof on that truck and brought it up to Pinedale and built us a little shack in the middle of BLM's area there. We had water and sewage. And so that's where I lived while in Pinedale.

CECIL: With your family?

EUEL: With my family. BLM had a big garage because that's where our heavy equipment operator did all the improvements and maintenance of the equipment. He had a house trailer that he parked inside the fenced area there, and one of his water lines broke one day in the middle of the winter and it flooded a large area. So, we had an ice rink there, too. And our kids weren't old enough at that time to use them, but the other kids would come in there and skate on them.

Then I got into my first exposure to doing livestock trespass work there. There were some sheep operators that came into the high desert north of Rock Springs. They came in there and all the way up to LaBarge and Big Piney, Wyoming; they had grazing permits that we gave them. But they were way out of line. They never stayed on their allotments nor with the correct numbers, so I issued a trespass notice. I served it on this rancher in one of the bars in LaBarge, Wyoming. And I want to tell you that was kind of testy to do it down there because, you know, there was a kind of a tough area. But I got a lot of pats on the back from rancher up north that were cattlemen, of course. And this is kind of funny because my ranching background and my grandfather's and my father's was sheep and goats, not cattle. A few cattle, but mostly sheep and goats. And so, I got accused of being prejudiced, I guess, to sheep operators. And I certainly did not feel then or now that I was.

CECIL: What was your job in Pinedale? Were you the District Manager in Pinedale?

EUEL: Yeah. Of course, it's not a District anymore.

CECIL: No, but it

EUEL: It was then.

CECIL: It was then on up into the 70's.

EUEL: Yeah, that's right. Let's see there was an office administrator; Woody Nelson, I think his name was. And he was also the secretary. And then there was Jim who, Jim Beidler, was that his name? He was an assistant there with me; he and I worked together pretty strongly. And then we had the heavy equipment operator. And I think Marlyn Jones might have been there just about the time I was leaving. We had a few fires there also. We did a lot of our work horseback there too because it was pretty rough country.

One of the things that I remember very clearly and was that there were Section 15 lands down in the Jackson Hole country. And there were some islands in the Snake River that had enormous cottonwood trees on them. At that time, the cadastral survey people were still in the districts finishing up the cadastral surveys. One of them said, you know, there might be some land down there that ought to be public land because it preceded the entry of the state into the Union. So, I went down to Jackson Hole in the late fall when the Snake River was quite small. It wasn't running very high, and I waded across to these islands. I had a wood boring instrument that you bore a hole into the tree, go all the way to the heart, and then you pull it out and it's a little plug about the size of a pencil. And you can count the rings on the tree and determine its age. And lo and behold, a lot of those trees predated the state's entry into the Union. So, they were public domain land. And that came as a surprise to quite a few of the local ranchers. But there was no complaint because it wasn't a big deal, only a few acres. At any rate, that was an interesting thing. I had never done that

before.

One other thing that I remember very clearly in Pinedale was that the elk hunting was outstanding, as it is in a good many places. But at that time, I saw elk out on the flat lands, out in the high desert, maybe 20 miles from the mountain. Absolutely no habitat that we think of now as elk habitat, just sagebrush and grass. Big blow out, you know, just grazing along there. And anymore when you see elk, you usually see them in or very close to the mountains where there's a lot of cover. In the wintertime, of course, they come down out of there. But this was in the spring, in the middle of the summer. So, I thought that was pretty interesting.

CECIL: Did you have moose in town also?

EUEL: Absolutely, yeah. We'd have those come right down main street. Right down main street there in Pinedale. And maybe, they still do, but, you know, you see some of these movies with moose grazing, you know, walking down the main street and you find that hard to believe. But it was, there was quite a few of them. Another thing that was interesting. The local game warden there, a young man about my age, and I were pretty good friends. He had one of the early snowmobiles. But at that time, it wasn't like they are now. It was an airplane that didn't have any wings on it. An old airplane they had refitted with skis and didn't have any wings on it, and they'd go out there and they would herd the elk away (try to) away from the farmers' and ranchers' haystacks. And they would also chase the coyotes like you wouldn't believe in those things. And they could catch them. Of course, the coyotes could dodge their own. But I got in one time. I never did get to chase any coyotes but that was a real experience. The first snowmobile that I had ever been in.

CECIL: What were the principal issues that you faced as District Manager there in Pinedale other than the trespass issue that you mentioned?

EUEL: Well, there still was at that time, there was a trail,

a major livestock trial, and, you know, there still are. A lot of the land is set aside under public domain, under the grazing act, Taylor Grazing Act, was set aside for the movement of livestock back and forth between permit or private land areas.

CECIL: Stock drive ways?

EUEL: Stock drive ways, yeah. And enormous amounts of livestock would move from the southern part of the high desert down in Rock Springs and even further south, Wyoming. And in the spring of the year, well, late spring, they would trail up, you know, hundreds of cattle would trail up all the way through and on to the national forests for the summer grazing. We would have one of our people, District people, go with the big trail herd movement. It was well over a hundred miles of trail, maybe 130 or 140. And that was a real interesting time for them. They would tell me about all the interesting things, you know, around the campfire in the evening with the cowboys that were moving the livestock up. But primarily, I guess, I was just to trying to keep order. I never did get to do it. I had too many other administrative things to do seems to me like, although I got slapped on the wrist from the State Office in Cheyenne that I was spending too much time out in the field and not enough time at my desk taking care of administrative things.

We had an advisory board and met quite frequent with them. I got on very well with those people. I remember we would have our meetings up there and the snow had piled up in Pinedale like you wouldn't believe. Like up here in the northern country, up where my place has been up near Steamboat Lake. Five feet is not uncommon at all. I remember we had our advisory board meeting in one of the bars, local bars, because there was no other place. Our little District Office didn't have enough room. Ed Booker was with me, came up from Cheyenne at that time, who is another one of my real mentors in BLM, a real strong-willed person, you know, stand by your inclination to do what is right. Anyways, we take a coffee break or a smoke break (at that time everybody smoked or most everybody did). We'd go outside and geez there'd be guys laying in snowdrifts drunker than a skunk, right in the middle of the winter. He said, well, at least, we've got us a warm place to sleep. I did a little bit of timber sales work to private logging companies and so

we'd have to go up and cruise the timber and measure the amounts that were cut and mark the timber so that could be cut.

CECIL: Were you much into the range adjudication program at that time?

EUEL: Yeah, we started that quite a bit. But nothing spectacular. That brings me to another interesting program. Part of the range adjudication was figuring out how much winter forage these people had available for how many permitted livestock they might have. So, we had to go out and measure their haystacks. And it was interesting throwing the rope over and measuring the length of the rope and then computing the amount of hay that was piled up in the haystacks. And I can remember going down to Big Piney, Wyoming, just off of the Green River and measuring hay down there. And staying in a Forest Service cabin up on the forest boundary. And it got so cold out there even with a big log fireplace that I couldn't stand it anymore. In fact, I'd have to put a blanket down over my radiator so it wouldn't freeze up when I was driving back and forth. It would be 40, 45 below zero for days on end down there. I think Russ Penney came from that part of the country, up in there somewhere. But anyways, that was a very interesting experience. I enjoyed the fishing there immensely, the rivers, the Green River, the New Fork, unbelievable area. Skiing, of course, we didn't have any lifts, but we would do a lot of cross country and then hike up some of these hills and ski down. Played hockey, kind of a semi-pro hockey. (When I was a kid in high school in northern Wisconsin, our little team in high school was undefeated for three years. We were supported by the American Legion. But we had a lot of Canadian people that had come down to work in the papermill and those kids were really hockey pros, believe me.) And then in Pinedale, we developed a little team, and we would play hockey there in Pinedale. And we went down to Jackson Hole and would play those people and got exposed to Jackson Hole well. I remember on one of the trips down from Pinedale to Jackson, in the middle of the winter, in addition to hockey, there was a winter festival. They had horse racing and behind the horses, they would have people in either sleds like the old Romans used to be or they would be on skis. But on the way down on the Maback where it flows down into the Snake River at Jackson, there were some big horn sheep. And one

big ram had tried to cross the river and, of course, it was flowing like mad and the ice broke. And he had fallen in the water. And, of course, there was just me and my wife and my oldest son at that time. We couldn't do anything. So, I went on into Jackson and told the State Game and Fish about it. And they said, oh yeah, that happens all the time. And so that was the end of that. But it was really something to see that Big Horn ram right there. Okay. Next on the road then is Baker, Oregon. And I was there at Baker for 5 years.

CECIL: And you went to Baker in about when?

EUEL: Had to be about 1955.

CECIL: And you went as District Manager?

EUEL: Yeah.

CECIL: Again.

EUEL: Yeah, in fact, Ed Booker who was, as I say, down in Cheyenne at that time. He was going to be transferred to the State Office in Portland. And he called me up and he said, would you be interested in going to Baker? I said, geez, I don't know. I never heard of it before. But he told me a little bit about it, and he said, there's some real problems there and you'll find it very interesting. That was the understatement of the century for me. So, I said, sure, we'll go over there. And so, we took off and moved up to Baker. I went up first and my wife came up later on the train. I don't know how she got on the train from Pinedale. But anyways, I can remember. Oh, I met her up near Casper, I think. No, that wouldn't be right.

CECIL: Probably Rock Springs.

EUEL: Rock Springs, of course. Yeah, that's right. Went down there and met her. I got there a month or so in advance of

her and rented a little place; it was in the middle of fire season. And after my experience in fires with the U.S. Forest Service and at Lander and at White Hall, I was totally dumbfounded by how the lack of preparation that BLM had there at Baker for any fires. And that place was burning all the time. We averaged all the time that I was there, over 100 fires every year, every summer. We didn't have shovels, no polaskies. They didn't even know what they were. And no training. So, we immediately arranged for the purchase of 100 shovels and 150 polaskies and things like that and we got some surplus army equipment that we could put big water tanks in. And we got pressurized pumps, gasoline pumps. So that we could go out on the range fires and go along and spray them. We also got some surplus, Army surplus, bulldozers. I sent one of the guys way down to, let's see, west of Las Vegas, a big Army surplus place. In California, they had surplus and so we purchased a used flatbed trailer and truck and sent him down there. Sam Heath was his name. He had been a rancher there at Baker, a small rancher, a real fine guy. And he came to work for us as the heavy equipment operator. We were building roads and fire breaks and doing a lot of trail work. And trying to put in fire breaks before the season started because we'd get a lot of lightning there. We built a lookout up on Lookout Mountain down overlooking the Snake River down near Huntington, Oregon, right near the Oregon/Idaho line. And built that lookout and had a guy up there, didn't have a telephone at that time but we had some of the first BLM radios. Had to build a road all the way to the top of the mountain. Very interesting. Our first lookout was a high schooler, and he was up there as a lookout and he would radio, this lightning is hitting right there. And you go up there and see it and it would hit those rocks right by the lookout and just smash those big rocks. It was scary for him. But he had a truck, so I told him when you get a storm like that, get down the mountain for a while til the storm kind of passes over. Then back up on that lookout and start watching. And we had a lot of fires in the Snake River Canyon. And they were very difficult to put out because they were steep, no road, and we couldn't get men down in there. So, we hired a private pilot that had a couple little airplanes. During the 5-year period, we developed the first dropping that I'd ever heard of water from the air on fires. And it worked pretty successful, and we got, we then got some kind of a mixture of seaweed that we'd put in with the water and it tended to be even better in putting out the fires. It would seal them off a lot

more. Probably, it didn't evaporate it immediately with that seaweed in it, kind of a slime. But we worked very closely with the Forest Service on the fires there. We would all pitch in. We'd get all the men we could. We had a lot of braceros, the Mexicans from down in the Texas area and Mexico, the people that would come over and work and we had them come up and work. And they weren't satisfied with the food that we would send out to them on the fire line. So, they would catch rabbits and cook the rabbits. I said why didn't you put this fire out? So, they could cook the food. (I got exposed to the braceros when I was going to school for my masters in range management at Texas A&M. I did my masters work and my research down in the King Ranch right on the Mexican border. And that's all they had for help down there on the ranch were braceros. Extremely capable people. Some of the best horsemen that I have ever seen. And rope, -- they could rope those steers right in all that mesquite brush and thorns and cactus. They were unbelievable. And I also got exposed to the Mexican cuisine. Fantastic, I really loved it. But, anyways, I kind of got away from the subject here.) One of the biggest things that we did, and I talk about we because we had a team that really functioned well. The secretaries, the older one, her name, I think, was Carolyn Watkins, great big gal. Do you remember?

CECIL: Uh huh.

EUEL: And she had a horse, Carolyn did, she rode horseback a lot. And I don't remember the name of her horse either, but she would tell him when she was going to get on him to squat and boy, he spread all four legs and would kind of hunker down. And she'd get up on it. She was really some gal. And then the other secretary was Louise Todd, very, very efficient young lady. And I was surprised, very surprised, to see her name in the current PLF Register. She retired, of course, but she has joined PLF. And her name is still there. And one of the ladies that was at the PLF meeting here last month was a gal that does kind of acting and talking things out. I can't remember her name. But she comes from Baker, Oregon. So, after the program was over, (she was excellent incidentally), I asked her if she knew Louise Todd. She said, oh, yeah, I know her very well. It's a small world when you really think about it.

But anyways, in addition to the ladies, we had quite a crew. Jack McIntosh was there for, I think, about 3 months after I got there and helped me kind of settle into things. Our office was in the old Post Office building upstairs. And then he transferred but I was able to get through the help of the State Office Don Getty who was the leader of a range survey team that we put together to do a survey of the range on Sisley Creek. That was primarily the area cause we had some problems down there. More about them in just a minute. One of the technical assistants that I had, probably as good as any I ever had, was Ron Younger, very capable person. And then there was Jim Yoakum on the survey team.

TAPE ENDED

CECIL: We sort of ran out of tape on the other side. And we had to stop and turn it over. We're beginning side two and EUEL, you were just getting into the range survey team for the Sisley Creek area.

EUEL: Right, okay. The team as I've already mentioned was Ron Younger, Don Getty, Jim Yoakum, and a couple of other people that I can't recall at this time. They surveyed the Sisley Creek grazing allotment, which went into Burnt River out of Durkee, Oregon. And over to the top of the Divide and down into part of the Snake River Canyon. Very, very rugged terrain. Heavily over grazed; had been grazed so hard in the past that there was almost nothing but cheat grass in there which is, of course, okay in the spring when it's green. But it dries up, becomes purple and is a tremendous fire hazard. And a lot of close coordination with the State Director, Virgil Heath and also, of course, Ed Booker. And Ed had a lot of experience in these kind of things. We had to go in and do a lot of the range adjudication and also check out the qualifications of the grazing people. One of the former District Managers that was there during World War II had permitted the grazing permits to be increased enormously, probably a hundred percent. And I won't say anything about his name because it's not relevant, I guess. Anyways, we had to get back to what the range could carry. And that was the main purpose of the grazing survey (the range survey). I had quite a bit of support from some of the advisory board members. And, of course, a couple of the

advisory board members were from that part of the District and they were not supportive. So, we had some real difficulties even getting started. I can remember one instance that was kind of amusing that I look back. (It wasn't at the time.) We didn't have any horses in BLM in the District at that time. So, we would depend on the ranchers when we went out with them, and we did almost all the time. We'd go with them so we could see what it was that they were up against. And they could see our point of view, hopefully. We would rely on them for the horses. We got a few saddles to start with and I can remember we went up into the Sisley Creek area and they saddled up this horse for me. A nice horse. And I was, you know, talking to several of them. They were taking my attention. And I started to crawl onto that saddle and the damn thing flew underneath the horse's belly and me with it. They had not tightened the cinch. And, you know, they thought it was just funnier than all get out and they did it intentionally -- the guy that was doing that saddling. So, I learned. Didn't get hurt, of course, and the horse was like I say a good horse and he didn't move. And so, I tightened up the cinch and I learned right there at that point never, never to trust anybody else. I don't know why I did anyways cause I'd been on a lot of horses before. But to do my own saddling and cinch work.

At that time also we made a pitch to the State Office in Portland, Oregon, that we needed our own transportation on the public lands and that we needed some horses. They let us go ahead and buy some. And we had some land down there in Baker City that we built the corrals and a little shed to store all of our equipment and everything. And it was good because we could then store our fencing equipment, the fence posts, the wire, staples, and what have you. To get on with it, finally after about 2-1/2 or 3 years, we got the survey done. It took a lot of on-the-ground work because like I say, it was very rough country, wasn't an awfully big area as we know BLM lands, but we got the survey completed and went over it in detail amongst our team. And then we went over it with Ed Booker; and it came out that we were going to have to put on an 85 percent reduction in grazing to get down to what the land would carry. Well, I said, this is not going to go over very well with these people. Booker says, we're going to do it -- and I want you to hang in there. So, we did.

We did and, of course, they appealed the decision. About a year later, a hearing was scheduled. And the Hearings Examiner took three or four or five days for the appeal to go. We had our own BLM attorney down there and Darrell Fullwider was the District Manager in the early time, and he came up too because some of those people grazed on lands that he administered down there.

CECIL: Fullwider was the District Manager at Baker or at Vale?

EUEL: Vale. At Vale, yeah. Before I left Baker, he transferred somewhere. He had a medical problem. So, he had to transfer. Incidentally, he was at our recent meeting with PLF.

CECIL: I'll be darned.

EUEL: Yeah, I was really impressed with that. But anyways, Max Lawrence came on board as the Vale District Manager. Max and I always worked very closely together. Anyways, we had the appeal, and the Hearing Examiner didn't spend too much time making a judgement. I think several weeks, perhaps. But he changed the grazing reduction from 85 percent. I think it was down to 76 percent or 73 percent, something like that.

CECIL: Still substantial.

EUEL: Yeah, right. Now I'll tell you. That decision went over like a lead balloon. And I got some threats, some real threats over the telephone, never identify themselves but what they were going to do to me. So, I said, well, Fred Benson, you taught me right. You get rid of me, there's going to be another one just like me come on board. Nothing ever happened that I know of to me, anyways. It might of harmed some people later on.

CECIL: Well, was that the end of Sisley Creek?

EUEL: Yeah, while I was there anyways.

CECIL: Yeah.

EUEL: What we did is we was not let them on the public land until we counted their livestock; and that worked okay up to a point. But then after we would leave, the telephone line was working. They knew when we were coming because there would be guys out there on horseback when we arrived. And, oh, we're moving these livestock around. And this happened not only in Sisley Creek and in a good many other places in the District. Up near Halfway and down along the Snake River, Richmond or Richland?

CECIL: Richland.

EUEL: Richland. And the ranchers up there would do the same thing. So, we finally had to make another change, I think it was a first, at least as far as I knew then. We had to go in and mark the cattle. When they were herded up and ready to go on the permitted land, we marked them with a dye. We swabbed a big swipe of paint, not paint but some kind of a dye on them. It was a black dye. I can remember that very clearly. You had to be very careful because it was irritating and I remember doing this to several hundred livestock one day down along the river that ran into the Snake, I can't remember the name of the river now. Of course, it took us quite a while because those animals were not very cooperative. They didn't like it anymore than the ranchers did. So, I got it (the dye) all over my hands. I had to go relieve myself. I'm telling you, I got home that night and I was in fits, itching, itching, itching, itching. There was a meeting in Portland that I had to go to for some reason or the other. I think it was because of the reductions. So, I went to the doctor, and he gave me some ointment that I would rub on myself; it finally cooled the itching down a bit. But I want to tell you, I didn't know whether I was going to make it down to Portland or not. But that was about it for the grazing situation on Sisley Creek.

We had some other areas that were a little cantankerous, but

that Sisley Creek thing got some people to open their eyes and realize that we were going to change the way they were doing business. And the advisory board kind of went with us. I can remember one advisory board meeting. Virgil Heath - BLM JD, he came down and by geez he was roaring. Some of those guys were aggravating the hell out of him, you know, or aggravating BLM. Old Virgil got up there and I thought he was going to clobber one of those guys. I grabbed him by the arm; he settled down. Heck, we'd meet until 2 or 3 in the morning at some of those meetings. They just did not get over. And we had Louise Todd (one of the BLM secretaries). She stayed there and took minutes all the time. And it got to be so cantankerous during the Sisley Creek thing that the Advisory Board hired their own note taker and they had to compare notes after they were typed up to make sure that there was no major differences. So, we had some fun there.

CECIL: Is that what Booker was referring to when you were both still in Wyoming and he said that there were problems in Baker? It was that kind of situation?

EUEL: Yeah. He knew about that, yeah. I don't know who it was that told him. I have an idea that Howard Delano who was then the District Manager at Burns, Oregon, cause we had Section 15 lands up close to Burns along the Deschutes River. And I have an idea that Howard knew about these things. You know the grapevine; it works pretty well both ways. And he may have gotten Ed Booker up to date on that. But anyways, Booker supported us and so did Virgil Heath.

I remember one time getting harassed from a different direction. I got a call from one of the Assistant Directors in Washington, DC. He didn't come right out and tell me I had to do this or that or anything. But he was just inquiring as to how are things going, what are you doing, why are you doing this, are there any other alternatives? So, I called Virgil Heath after that and he said, ignore that, I'll take care of it. You do what you're doing. And that was pretty interesting too. You know, being a relative newcomer to the government I didn't think that. This was during the time of Ed Woosley (BLM Director, Washington Office). And, of course, Ed Woosley was from a ranching background in Idaho; and he was very concerned about

those kind of things. He made sure that we knew that he was concerned. And also, we had the National Advisory Board back in Washington, DC. And some of the local Advisory Board members occasionally would get to go to those and so I'm sure these things came out. So, they heard a different side of it back there than they would normally hear from us which, I guess, is fine too.

The other thing that I mentioned slightly that was a real high priority in Baker to me was the fire situation. As I mentioned, the vegetation there was highly conducive to fires, started very easily. We tried a few control burns and with the equipment we had, we didn't go do it very often nor on a very large area either. We couldn't contain them, really. We just did not have the equipment or the manpower, probably the know-how either. But we had some really big fires. One of the biggest ones was up in the Section 15 lands that were part of the Baker District area of responsibility along the Columbia River (up over the hill from LeGrand down into the Pendleton country). We had a lot of Section 15 lands up there. I spent quite a bit of time on those and had worked out some pretty good working relationships with those ranchers. And, of course, the ranches and BLM lands were right next to the bombing range, the Navy bombing range up there.

CECIL: At Boardman.

EUEL: At Boardman, yeah. And those guys (the pilots), missed their targets occasionally and they got over away from areas that had been cleared for fires and they set fires. Those bombs exploded. They weren't shrapnel type. But they had some flammable material in them. And with that cheat grass and all that dry stuff up there, the range just exploded. We had this Army surplus truck with the water pumps and water tanks in it. We couldn't even keep up with that fire with that truck. It was moving so fast. And it burned for 15 miles right up to the Columbia River and that's what stopped it. We didn't stop it. And it burned up all of these (not all of them) but several of the ranchers' winter range adjacent to the bombing range. And so, these ranchers took the U.S. Government to court. And I had the surprise of my life one day when here comes a couple of guys into the Baker office and showed me their ID from the FBI. And

I said, what the heck do you want with me? Well, they wanted me to be a witness at the trial that was going to be held. Where was the trial held? Well, to {**Hermstead**} maybe? Or maybe Pendleton. Anyways, I said, well, I want you to know right now that I think these ranchers are absolutely right in suing the government and I think they should get some money back because they're going to have to buy hay for their livestock in the winter. And they said, well, okay, you'll have to go and testify as an adverse witness, is that what they called it or reluctant witness, whatever. Anyways, I was going to have to testify. I went up there and I think the judge, it was kind of funny, cause he had grown up on a ranch in the Pendleton area. And so, there was no doubt about who was going to win that trial. And I guess they called on me, but I just said, yep, I thought the Navy was at fault and that was the verdict. I don't know what the final settlement was. And that was all it amounted to, but we had several of those fires up there that were big and almost uncontrollable. Once they got going and with the wind behind them, they were unbelievable. They really moved. So, I think that one burned, I don't know, 50,000 acres or so running down to the river.

CECIL: Did you send crews from Baker to fight fire up in that country?

EUEL: Occasionally, we'd send a few administrative people to kind of administer but we tried to hire most of the people locally. But we got good support from the livestock people, the ranchers up there. I don't remember an instance where I had any problems with those people. They were very, very nice and understanding. In the Section 15 area, of course, we didn't have grazing permits, just leasing, so we just had to work with them closely to determine the proper amount of grazing and they were pretty good to work with. Now, there's other Sections 15 lands that we had on the northeastern part of the District up along the Snake River down right to the Washington state boundary on the north. And what is the name of those little towns up in there?

CECIL: Well, there was Troy and.

EUEL: Here we go. I circled some of these.

CECIL: Enterprise.

EUEL: Enterprise, yeah. And let's see. My memory has really gone bonkers. Okay, Walla Walla, Elgin, Enterprise, Joseph, Imnaha, Troy. We had to get down in there quite often but again, the ranchers were very receptive to working with us. The first. One of the things I remember very much there is the Grande, what was the name of that river, the Grand River?

CECIL: The Grande Ronde

EUEL: Grande Ronde up in one of the branches up there near Joseph on the Salmons' spawn. That was the first time I ever saw large numbers of fish in the stream. I mean humongous salmon. Thousands of them. And those ranchers told me that in the earlier years there would be so many of them you could walk across the stream on the backs of those fish. It was just solid mass of fish going up there. And I didn't know whether to believe that or not. But that was a very interesting area. In fact, as you're going over the hill to Pendleton, there's a Forest Service research station or was at that time off the road a little bit. I don't remember what the name of it is. But one of the people that worked in there, I later ran into when I was working in Saudi Arabia. No, in Kenya. He was doing research over there. And so that was quite an experience. We got to know each other quite well.

But that's about the size of it for Baker. Most of my experience there was pretty good. A lot of friction at times, but I made some good friends in town. Had some good experiences there. I enjoyed going in some of the rivers and panning for gold, just fiddling around, and the hunting and the fishing. Not only on the Columbia River for salmon but steel head in some of those side rivers. Unbelievable resources in that area. And I drove through there a few years ago, a couple of years ago, and Baker is not a town anymore. They now call it Baker City and it really is. A small city, but nevertheless a city. It's much larger, of course, than it was when I was there. But still

a pretty nice place and I enjoyed it immensely. Do you have any thoughts since, you know, spent a lot of time there? I don't know how much time you spent there but.

CECIL: I spent a little more time than you. I was in Baker 7 years.

EUEL: Oh, I was there 5 years.

CECIL: And I agree, it is a really nice place and a nice place to work, and I worked a lot up in that Section 15 country along the Grande Ronde, Wallowa, Minam rivers, and around in that area.

EUEL: Unbelievable. You know, that was part of the enjoyment is just being in that kind of country. And we did quite a bit of timber work there too, not a lot but enough. And another amazing thing that happened. I think, I'm not sure exactly whether it was all on Forest Service or part on Forest Service and BLM was when they made the movie Paint Your Wagon. It was up there.

CECIL: It was all on Forest land.

EUEL: All on Forest land?

CECIL: Yeah.

EUEL: Okay. But I went up to that area once when they were making it. One of the sheep ranchers, he had a permit on the national forest right in that area. And he was nice, about my age maybe a little bit older. But I enjoyed, you know, working with him very much. But that was, you know, a real good, a real good place. I think Baker probably still is. Okay.

CECIL: You want to stop for a minute?

CECIL: We're back on the tape of Euel was just finishing telling about his experiences as District Manager in Baker, Oregon, and ready to move on to the next place. Before we get into that, EUEL, did you leave Baker, Oregon? Were you moved primarily because of the controversy over the Sisley Creek situation, or did you initiate the move for career advancement purposes?

EUEL: Well, I didn't initiate it but wasn't disappointed when it came. And I think it was that I was moved because of the controversy there. And I think it was a good thing. They needed somebody to come in and, you know, kind of take a different tact on things. My wife used to say that she would never walk down the street in Baker with me. She was always either 50 feet ahead of me or 50 feet behind because she didn't want to be associated with a bummer.

CECIL: Get struck by a near miss, huh?

EUEL: Yeah, right. But I had a call one morning in Baker from Russ Penney who I had met years ago out on one of these details in Washington, DC. Russ was back there in Washington, DC. In fact, I think that he was instrumental in getting me set up as one of the people that spent a year back there. I went back there for a week or so and there were several other people that were interviewed and Russ, I think, spoke in favor of me coming back. But anyways, Russ called me from Reno, Nevada. He was the State Director down in Reno, had just moved there. And said would I be interested in coming down to Las Vegas. And it was early in the morning. I mean it was before 8 o'clock because I always got there before 8. And I said, geez, Russ, I'm very interested. I don't know anything about that area, but I would have to talk to my wife first. And he said, well, go ahead, I want an answer within a couple of hours. So, I had to run home and talk to my wife, and she said she was willing to give it a try. But, of course, we had bought a house by then. In fact, we had bought the house from John Lanz who was the District Forester. I neglected to mention that. He was my

District Forester there at Baker. And I had known John in the University of Montana as a forestry school student. But he had been transferred over into the O&C country and I bought the house from him when he left. And I had to sell the house, of course, so I called Russ Penny back and I said, yeah, Russ, we'd like a shot at it, but I've got a lot of loose ends that I've got to take care of and what we would like to do is we would like to come down to Las Vegas and just take a looksee. He said, well, I need to know are you going to take it or aren't you. I said, yeah, I think we will, but I want to take a looksee. I wanted to leave some loose ends open. And that, you know, didn't set too well with Russ. He wanted to make a decision and get it done. So, we took our trailer and we drove down to Vegas. It was in the spring of the year, and it was so hot I couldn't believe it. But anyways, we fiddled around and spent a week down there. I called Russ after the second day or so and said, yep, we'll take it. I need to go home, get my house sold and all that kind of stuff. And he said, okay. So, we moved down there.

CECIL: Can you put a date on that for us, Euel?

EUEL: That was in 1957 or '58. And again, I'll confirm that. Wait a minute, I can confirm that right here. We moved there in 1960.

CECIL: 1960?

EUEL: Yeah. And I was there until 1964. And one of the first things that got my attention, really staggered me, was the size of that District. It's the largest District in the U.S. outside of Alaska, at that time called the lower 48. Thirteen million acres in that sucker. And just to get acquainted with it took a lot of time and effort driving around here and there. Now, it was different in many respects and one of them, of course, is that I had never been exposed to real desert country. I had driven through some before in California and up here in Colorado, the Sand Dunes. But I'd never been exposed to such an enormous expanse of desert country -- And the lack of what I thought public lands usually had, a lot of wildlife, watersheds. Well, they have watersheds there too but they're different

kinds.

But I finally got kind of zeroed in on that and got to some of the really interesting places and there are a lot of them. The desert down there at night is a fantastic place to be. The wildlife is a lot of it unbelievable. Desert animals that get out during the night because it's too hot during the day. They've apparently lately come up with a lot of new wildlife, at least to me. I'd see them, see these desert tortoises but at that time, they weren't on the endangered wildlife species. You know, you didn't think much of them. You'd see what remained of them on the highway. But a lot of it in Las Vegas was just kind of getting our act together, BLM's act together. And we didn't have a big crew there either. Our office was right downtown in Vegas at that time where the big action was. It was before the strip became really active.

Our office was right next to many of those big gambling casinos. They're much bigger now, of course. And we had to transfer some of the people, the personnel that we had because they got addicted to gambling. And they would spend their whole paycheck before they could take it home. So, some of them had to be transferred out of state even. But mostly the BLMers there were able to cope pretty well. I don't remember too many of the names. Loren Miller was the Assistant. He's now retired and lives over in Utah, right off of I-70, I guess it is. But I haven't seen him to talk with him for many years. But he was a very helpful person to me in the office there. We had an office, as I say it was right down by the casinos. We'd got out to have our lunch every day and go over and get those big lunches, those big cheapies for freebies.

We had some range water situations we had to look into because at that time, it was still touch and go arguments. And I guess there still are in the Vegas valley about the use of water that's pumped in from the Colorado River and the reservoir out there, Boulder Dam. There were six employees including the secretaries for that thirteen million acres when I moved there. And I think we maybe added one or two. Now, the last time I was in Vegas a couple of years ago, I was told that there were a hundred and twenty-three employees there. And I found that absolutely dumbfounding. What in the world did they have to do for 123 people? But apparently, you know, the big deal there now or one of the big deals is environmental habitat and species

that are on the verge of extinction and that sort of thing. I gather now from reading in the newspapers that there's still a lot of activity going on in the sale of public lands in the general Las Vegas valley itself.

CECIL: Was that an active program during your time?

EUEL: Yes it was. Nothing like it is now but I can remember people coming in. The Land Office had a suboffice down there and people would come in after winning a pile of money on the slots or in the various gambling games and come in and buy, you know, a five-acre plot there in town. And they'd get it for peanuts compared to what it sells for now.

We had some interesting wild burro problems out where BLM joined with the Grand Canyon National Park. And we had to work with them on that. There were a lot of frustrations about the Big Horn sheep, the desert Big Horn. I had a geologist that came in for a couple of years and was working on some of the geological surveys that had to do with BLM's programs. And he and I were interested in hunting, so we got permits to hunt Bighorn sheep. And it was up on the Nellis Air Force bombing range. We had to go through the gates at certain times of the day, then be out of there by certain times of the day. But we both got Bighorn rams. They went into the Boone & Cracker Club, both of them. They were enormous, in fact, we both had the horns and heads mounted. And I brought mine back up to here when I came back to the Denver Service Center and had it in my office here in this building. During Christmas, they did some cleaning and repainting and it got knocked off the wall and broke the horns. But I patched them up and then took them home and put them in my basement out here in Golden. And I went on a trip somewhere, my wife went with me. My oldest son was kind of babysitting. We were gone for a day or so. And I came home, and that Bighorn sheep head was gone. Where did it go? Well, I finally got it out of my youngest son. He sold it to a friend of his for a dollar. They (the family) had moved to Texas so that was the end of my Bighorn sheep.

CECIL: Time out while we change tapes, Euel.

CECIL: Okay. We're back on the tape. This is the beginning

of the first side of the second tape of the interview with Euel Davis on October 15, 1996. Go ahead, Euel.

EUEL: Okay. When I digressed a moment, we were talking about Las Vegas, my tour there. Okay. We didn't do any real surveys as such, not what you'd call scientific range surveys. But we did a lot of evaluation of the range areas. Royal Hall was one of the employees there and he was very, very helpful. He was there when I arrived. And we put in some vegetative exclosures down along the river, Colorado River, down at Laughlin.

CECIL: Laughlin?

EUEL: Laughlin. There are big casinos there too. But at that time, there was almost nothing there. We put in some of those exclosures and would measure them occasionally. But we didn't have enough people for one thing to do a lot of grazing and vegetation evaluations. The biggest grazing area we had when I was there that was up in the northeastern part of the state up near Caliente, a lot of grazing going up there. They would join Utah, the Cedar City, Utah, District; Kay Wilkes was the District Manager at the same time that I was there in Vegas. So, we got to know each other quite well.

There were some nice areas up out of Caliente, mountainous areas. Nothing like we have here in Colorado but kind of rolling hills. There were some fairly nice streams. Some of the streams had, if you can believe it, trout in them and I caught a few of them. They weren't big so didn't do much of that. But it was just interesting.

We had another trespass situation which seems to be the name of the game for me. Down the little stream just northeast of Las Vegas about halfway between Las Vegas and Mesquite (a little village at that time) was an elderly woman that had an old ranch way out there. I mean she had no electricity. She had a gas-powered electrical generator but no plumbing. She had a few springs that were fairly common in the area along with little streams and she had a BLM grazing permit for 18 head of horses. And she was almost totally blind. After I'd been up to see her

a couple of times about those horses, she said, I can't see you, but I can sense you. Your name is EUEL Davis. I can sense that you're very evil. (It was kind of a joke, I guess, but it wasn't easy to take.) But she had been named the Poet Laureate of the state of Nevada by the Governor. She was quite a poetess. Because I got some pressure from the other ranchers, I had to reduce (not the number of horses she had) but the size of her allotment. There was 18 head of horses on an allotment 183,000 acres in size. She left them out there year-round. She never gathered them. She could not see them. But she just was very belligerent about that. So, she appealed the reduction decision, and we went to court on that too. And the hearings examiner found in favor of the Bureau. I think we put it down to about 100,000 acres for those 18 head of horses. You have to remember that this is not where it takes 2-1/2 to 3 acres per animal unit month for a cow or a cow and calf (or horse). It takes a lot of acreage in that desert country. But 100,000 acres is still a lot of land for 18 head of horses. At any rate, the hearing examiner found in the Bureau's favor. I had some support from the Reno office, the State Office, in that regard. I can't remember the name of the State range man at that time. But I do remember one of the young men that worked for him in Reno. His name was Roscoe Ferris, Ross Ferris. He came down and we worked together very closely.

But another thing that we worked on when Ross came down was wild horses because there were a lot of them and there had been no control over them. We were getting a lot of static about that from the livestock people. We went out with permission from the Air Force, on the Nellis Air Force bombing range and checked them out. We found hundreds of wild horses. But if they were kept inside of the bombing range, the Air Force could care less. So, we worked up a proposal to set up a wild horse range for wild horses on the bombing range. You know, it was the first wild horse range on BLM lands to my knowledge.

About the same time, wild horses were kind of a point of focus up in Montana. And I know Turk (George Turcott) was up there then and he was quite heavily involved in setting up the BLM wild horse program. But at any rate, we got a wild horse range recognized on the bombing range. But there was some interesting things that went on while we were out there kind of surveying the general area. I took some pictures, moving pictures, of those critters, and I don't know what happened to the film. I

don't have it. I left it in the District Office, but I never heard anything about it.

But the air flights over the bombing range while we would be out there were typical of "Top Gun" pilots. Those pilots would come down and in effect dive bomb us. Not with bombs but they would come down with those jets and would be so close to the top of that pickup that they would just suck us up in the air. The whole pickup. I mean the back end would just kind of rise up, you know, like 8 to 10 inches, scary. So, we went off to the Air Force headquarters at the Nellis Air Force Base and the guy that went out there was Bud Morgan. (He was the manager for the Big Horn sheep range there in that same area. Of course, he'd had some similar experiences with the Air Force flights, out on the Big Horn sheep range.) And we got out there and we walked into the Air Force Headquarters. We had to go through clearance, of course. At that time, it was like the clearance that you have to go through here, show a driver's license and that sort of thing. But we were in there talking to some of those people and here comes the General, the head man, into the office. And we were talking the lower echelon people. He said, what are these civilians doing in here? Nobody asked me if they could come here. It's none of their business what goes on here. And the Captain that we were talking to said, well, we told them they could come and we're talking about the horses and all that. Well, get that business over and get them out of here. So, we didn't spend too much time there. But at any rate, we got that job done. It was kind of a fun thing.

There was some old mining cabins out on that bombing range up far north towards the Ely District and the Winnemucca District. And we used to stay in those cabins. I remember staying in the cabin one time with the District Manager of Winnemucca, Jesse Lowe. Real fine young man. And, of course, Curt McVee was the District Manager at Ely and Claire Whitlock (Sam Whitlock) was the District Manager at Elko. And we worked very closely together cause our Districts were so large that they joined. We had a lot of range fires in that desert area. A lot of lightning out there and we'd get fires sometimes in the Zahara cactus or the prickly pears, the dead stuff. Or some of the brush (creosote brush) that was out there. We set a lookout up in the Caliente area because there was, up there, a lot of pinyon pine and juniper in the hills. It wasn't too bad. We didn't have any critical or extreme fires but just enough to be

an aggravation. They've maintained that fire lookout. Now, of course, after a major fire, they cruise over it in the light aircraft, fixed wing aircraft; I suppose they even use helicopters now in some areas. But it opened up some more of that area for people to get out into. And lo and behold, they've set up some state parks along those areas and some BLM recreation areas along some of those little streams which is very interesting.

Also, we were very close to Death Valley. And there's lots of hot springs out in the desert. Lots of mineral springs would just bubble out of nowhere. They're very warm to being hot. And we used to go over there and swim in them, not really swim but dunk in them. One guy said he was a geologist, I don't know, but he told me that these springs were connected with the Pacific Ocean through geological faults and what we saw (there was movement, a lot of up and down movement in those springs -- maybe as much as a foot. Those that were down kind of deep in a little bit of a cave. They'd move up and down. And he said that it was the tide waters from the Pacific.) Well, I didn't quite buy into that, but it was kind of curious thing. It may have been somebody else, another geologist told me it may have been an astrological thing. A movement, well, like the tides because of the, you know, the planets and all. I don't know what it was, but it was interesting.

Another thing that I'm sure that the lady who is going to transcribe this will be interested in. Out there in the middle of nowhere, (about the last year that I was in Las Vegas) and I think I was there four or five years. There were small plats of land or on these some of these springs, private land that had been homesteaded. And there were houses set up there for ladies of the night, the "cathouses." And I got another trespass problem with those gals in those houses. They all wanted to have a few horses. And they turned each other in. They were jealous as all get out. So, I had to go up there and check it out. And they started screaming at each other, and I just got the hell out of there. I didn't want any part of that. So, I don't know how they reconciled their horse trespass.

CECIL: How did you reconcile it from the Bureau side.

EUEL: I forgot about it. I never mentioned it. The straight arrow stuff got lost in the records there, I think.

Another interesting thing, on the way north up to Reno from Vegas, there was a big castle like building. And yeah, it was up towards Tonopah, and you turned off at Scotty's junction going west into Death Valley and just inside of Death Valley was "Scotty's Castle." Okay, leave Vegas and just before you got to Beatty, which is about 50, 60 miles out of Vegas, off to the west along the highway there, all of a sudden one day I noticed a big soil berm. That sucker was like 20 feet high, and it ran for oh, maybe, 200 or 300 yards, just along the highway. And I asked somebody when I got into Beatty what in the world was that for? And they said, well, somebody had come by there with a rifle and was shooting at the cathouses on the back side and so they put this berm up so they couldn't shoot into the cathouses. Things went on down there in the Vegas country that are almost hard to believe.

And to think that valley was settled by Mormons and developed by the Mormons. There's still a lot of people there of that faith. And I think they do pretty well. They don't have gambling in Utah yet to my knowledge. They don't have to cause they can drive from Utah, if they want to and a lot of them do. They go down from St. George, Utah, then down to Mesquite. And they can gamble there. It's now a big casino town, just a little berg when I was there. And outstanding food for nothing, just almost nothing.

CECIL: It's not very far away from St. George.

EUEL: No, I think it's what 50 miles down the canyon there, maybe less than that.

CECIL: Down the Virgin River Canyon.

EUEL: Yeah, right. I remember a flood down the Virgin Canyon. A bunch of boy scouts were out camping, and I don't think any of them got drowned but they really got scattered and had to climb the sides of the mountain because that flood just

came down there all of a sudden. My oldest son was a boy scout there, but fortunately, he was not in that particular area when they had that flood.

CECIL: From what you're saying, I would get the impression that during your time in Las Vegas, it was just sort of general BLM business rather than any big major issues confronting the situation.

EUEL: That's right. Didn't have any major confrontations other than a few of these little nitpicky things. And when I was there, we built a kind of an area office headquarters up at Caliente. A nice little area up there in Caliente. And just as I was leaving is when it was completed that, so I don't know what's happened to it since then.

But my tour in Vegas was really an eye opener and it really prepared me (though I didn't know about it or even think about it at the time) for coping with truly desert environment. And that happened, of course, when I went to the Middle East into Saudi Arabia and then later into Somalia and parts of Kenya were the same way. The vegetation is totally different. The livestock have to be managed in a different fashion and you have to manage your own life in a different fashion. But we managed to do that.

I don't know if there's much else that I can say about Las Vegas. Oh, we did have, I guess I made just a note of it once before, we had a lot of small tract sales when I was down there. And that's opened up now to a lot more. I didn't know much about the land office type business having had very little experience in it, just exposure to it from a few people. But I think that that probably set the stage for me being moved from there because I did not see eye to eye with the Reno Office. You know, my feeling was that they wanted me to become much more involved in the small tract program down there. And I didn't know that much about it. We had some of that take place, like I say, two years ago when I was down in Vegas. I went out into that area and there was absolutely nothing when I was there, absolutely nothing. And now it's just loaded with great big developments, condominiums, big homes. It's a nice area. The Red Rocks area. And there used to be a skiing, still is a

skiing area up in the Charleston Mountain area which we were adjacent to on the lower end of it. We did some water control, soil erosion control programs there. There was good deer hunting up in the mountains there. But I didn't spend much time up in that area. It was a national forest and I'd go through there occasionally. But most of my times, 90 percent of it or 95 percent, I suppose, was spent on the BLM lands in trying to get around back and forth.

I did do quite a bit up on some Section 15 lands up north the District Area and west of Tonopah. That would be going into California but up in the mountain area, Montgomery Pass and over into Bishop area. And so, you'd get up in that high country and there were a lot of remains of old trees, the bristle cone pine. Unbelievably old. You'd think that they were dead but up close looks showed there's still life in those trees. And we had to be careful because some people were starting to cut those trees down. You could get into them pretty close with a four-wheel drive. Those and the Sahara cactus and were being cut down and moved in as a decoration in their yards. We had to start patrolling that a bit and that was kind of tough because it was a long way away (150 miles from the Las Vegas Office) and we didn't have that many people anyways. But that was just towards the end of my term there. But anyways, I think that the small tract bit in the Vegas Valley. I never got a clear indication but that's when I was offered to go back to Washington, DC.

CECIL: Your feeling is that the State Office wanted you more in the promotion of the small tract?

EUEL: That was my feeling.

CECIL: Yeah.

EUEL: And whether it was right or not, I'm not sure but that was the inference that I got. And there was a guy up in the State Office. I don't know whether you knew him or remember him, {****Kurt Hammett****}.

CECIL: Yeah, I knew Kurt.

EUEL: Real nice guy, I thought. And he called me a couple of times and he says, walk softly, walk softly. I said, what the hell do you mean? He says, be careful is all I'm going to tell you. I can't do anything more than call you and tell you that. Russ Penny as I said earlier, I think was instrumental in my first tour or my first short-term tour back in DC. I don't think that he was really too supportive of the way I was doing things down there. He never did come right out and tell me that. Although one time, we were having a meeting at all the Districts in the State. All the District Managers and, I guess, the Assistants had to go to those. And the one up at Winnemucca, as I recall. And we were discussing something. I can't even remember what it was now, but I opened my big fat mouth and disagreed with Russ on it. And I recall he said, I don't think you ought to get involved in this. And I said, well, I have no intention of arguing with you. I thought I was backing off. But he said, absolutely, you're not going to argue with me. Shut up and sit down. And I did. And so, things didn't get any better. We didn't have anymore words cause I just finally learned that I better, you know, get off of my high horse and do my job and just not disagree with him. But things did not get better. And when I got this call from Washington, I have an idea that somebody put him wise to the fact that it was time for me to move on. And that's when we moved from there to Washington.

CECIL: This is the end of the first side of the second tape with Mr. Davis. We'll shut it off now and turn the tape over.

CECIL: This is a continuation of the oral history interview with retired BLM employee, Euel Davis. The first such interview session was on Tuesday afternoon, October 15th. Today it is Friday, October 18th in the morning. Again, in the Executive Conference Room of the Applied Resource Sciences Center.

CECIL: Okay, Euel, when we last talked on Tuesday, you related your background and the BLM experiences up through your service

as District Manager of the Las Vegas District Office and you're just getting ready to go on from there. So, let's pick up the story at that point.

EUEL: Okay. From Las Vegas, I went to the University of Michigan just out of Detroit on a program with the BLM, the Interior Department was putting on. They had various employees go back there from time to time to get additional training or education and this was for a Master's degree in Public Land Administration. And instead of focusing on the range or forestry or land management specialties like I had in all the districts before, this was on the economics and public administration of public lands. I spent a year there.

CECIL: Do you remember the date on that?

EUEL: Well, let's see. It was 1969.

CECIL: You went there in '69?

EUEL: Right, in the spring of 1969, and I graduated there one year later in the spring of 1970. It was a good experience. It was totally different than what I had done before at the University of Montana and Texas A&M because they were all technical resource management programs. And this was, as I say, economics and public administration or administration of the public lands. And so, it was a different thing for me as a student. I hadn't been in school, of course, for a good many years, and to get back into the student/professor relationship took a little doing. Actually, I found the professors to be very open minded and very easy to communicate with.

CECIL: We're back on the tape after a brief interruption.

EUEL: Okay, I wanted to change the date on my tour at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, Michigan, to 1966 and 1967. And then got my degree then, a Master's in Public Land

Administration, I guess it was. I'll have to check that too. Then that was in the spring of 1967 and then.

CECIL: Were there any other BLM employees there at that time, EUEL, or were you on your own.

EUEL: No, there were other people there. The only other BLM person was Jim Wyatt. And I don't know whether you ever knew Jim or not.

CECIL: No. I did not.

EUEL: Well, he had been in the southwest after he left the University of Michigan, he went back to Washington, DC, and spent several years there. And then I lost of track of him until I heard from him. He had retired and lives, as far as I know, lives in northeastern Texas, north of Dallas. And we were, of course, neighbors and quite close friends there. And his wife was a little Hispanic lady, real nice, and she made the best hot tamales you can imagine. We were driving along the road one day. We'd been down to Detroit and there was a cornfield. It was in the middle of the winter and there was a cornfield out there and a lot of corn stalks still standing. And she hollered at Jim to stop the car and she and I got out and ran out there in the middle of that field and got armfuls of those stalks with a lot of corn husks on them. So, we had hot tamales for a long time. Excellent.

Okay, then after that in, I think it was in June of 1968, I moved out to the Denver Service Center here in, I believe it was Building 50 too. And it had just been established as the Service Center for the technical end of BLM's program. I think there were already other people, administrative people here. And Lowell Puckett was the first Service Center Director, and I was the first technical employee in terms of land management. Then next came along within just a matter of a few weeks Tom Heller. Did you ever know Tom Heller?

CECIL: No didn't know him.

EUEL: He's passed on. He did not have a long career in BLM, but it was a technical career; he was a retiree from the military. He came on board with BLM then and worked here out of the Federal Center.

CECIL: What was your job here, Euel?

EUEL: Well, actually, it was to set up a planning system. That's when we got started on the planning system. That was directed out of the Washington Office, Bob Jones' office. Later I went back there from time to time to have conferences with the people back there, the staff and Bob Jones. Al Leonard came in and worked real closely with us on that. But this is where we started the planning system as it was then. I don't know really what it's like at all anymore. But there was some interesting developments because in addition to trying to develop it and describe it, we had to make very close contact with all of the specialists in the field offices. So, we had numerous meetings in the State Offices and occasionally in a District Office.

In fact, one of our meetings was up in Fairbanks, Alaska, which was an interesting experience. I can remember going up there in the middle of the winter. It usually fell to me to go to Alaska in the middle of the winter. We took the train up from Anchorage up right past Denali and into Fairbanks. And it was brutally cold, in fact, it was 70 degrees below zero. And lo and behold, my luggage got lost and in it all of my heavy clothes, my long underwear and everything. So, we got into the hotel in Fairbanks, and I had to get up the next morning and run down to a store and buy some long underwear cause I mean it was bitter. The funny part of it, at least looking back now is during a private tour, a cruise, this past spring in 1996 to Fairbanks, it was 70 degrees above. I couldn't believe it, you know, -70 and +70.

But anyways, it was an interesting assignment to develop the planning system. I got into a lot of detailed strong discussion because we had to try to somehow bring together all of the different specialties in BLM to work it out. Work out, agree upon acceptable, workable system to plan how to manage the public lands. Prior to that time, it had been all mostly

forestry-oriented in the forest areas and range-oriented in the range areas. And really those were the two major problems that were looked at from the old Grazing Service on. And our chore was to come up with something that was a cooperative, correlated, accepted by all specialties in the Bureau and cleared with and explained to the public land users. It was difficult.

So, we came up with, coined a term, at least for us, it had been used, I'm sure, many places before, but it was how did we say, "tunnel vision"? Looking through a spy glass, I guess you'd call it, to make sure that we looked at each resource separately to get and describe and record the most, the highest output you could get from that resource. If it was grazing we were talking about, describe for every area in the District it was to be managed the maximum grazing capacity and the maximum grazing use without any regard for any other resource and record that. Then in addition to that, we would look at the other resources; if there was forestry, timber, we would maximize or record the maximization of timber production. If there was wildlife involved and there always was, we would record the maximum production and use of wildlife. And the same went on for every resource.

At that time, environmental considerations were realized but they weren't looked at in the same proportion that they are today. But they were realized because about this same time, we began developing environmental impact statement procedures. And the first one that was done that was actually carried out was just out of Rock Springs, Wyoming. Dan Baker was very instrumental in working that out. But anyways, we came up with this planning system and finally got everybody to agree, yeah, this is probably the way we ought to go. We show every resource, every different kind of resource on the public lands and throw together this whole pile of information and then sit down and work out an equitable distribution of how much of that resource should be harvested on this particular acre of land. It really required an awful lot of internal discussions within the District Offices, the Resource Area Offices, the State Offices, a lot of disagreement by BLM specialists.

I remember the wildlife specialist in the state of California. I don't remember his name right now. But anyways, we were meeting down there at San Diego. And he said impossible. You

cannot describe the environment for wildlife. You cannot describe it. You cannot measure it and put it on paper. It's too farfetched. But even he finally came around to agree that we had to do it and we did it the best we could. And I'm sure that the different resource people, not only BLM, but other State and federal organizations now are doing it is an improvement. At any rate, the planning system and then the environmental impact statement procedure for BLM were developed during this period that I was here in the Service Center in the early 1970's.

There were, of course, different Service Center Directors that came through during that period of; I think it was 3 years. So, there was different ideas as to how to proceed within the Service Center itself. But that had very little impact on how we put together the planning system as we knew it then. I'm not even sure that they use the same system nowadays. I haven't kept up with the BLM activity. But I'm sure they use something similar because I don't see how they could do it otherwise.

Okay, to move on, my next assignment was to move back to Washington, DC, in 1973. And that was as Chief of the Division of Watershed Management in the Washington Office. That was an interesting assignment because it took on a different aspect again from being a range specialist in a District for so many years and District Manager to go back to Washington, DC, and see how BLM operated there. It was really an eye-opener.

Not very encouraging many times. There was a lot of acrimony going on back there. Usually is, still is, I guess. It was in a time of change. There was a new President of the United States and there had been changes in the Interior Department. It was hard to accept a lot of the bureaucracy that existed. And I'm sure it existed long before that and still does. If anything, it's probably worse now, there's more people involved, more bureaucrats. And I guess I shouldn't use that term in a derogatory sense. I was one for all of my career. There are a lot of bureaucrats not in the federal or state government. Many, most large private organizations, I think, are bureaucrats. The churches are bureaucratic. They all have bureaucracy procedures that you have to contend with. So, it's a term that's frequently used in a derogatory sense. And I think that's unfortunate. Anyway.

CECIL: Euel, you mentioned there was a lot of acrimony. Was that within the Bureau itself or between the Bureau and other organizations both within and outside of the Interior Department?

EUEL: Well, there may have been outside of Interior. I don't recall. If there were and perhaps there were, I was not involved in any of them. I think that at that time there was some discussion as to maybe the Forest Service would take over all of the public land management. But I never got involved in any of those subjects. Most of the acrimony that I was aware of was within the Bureau, within the different specialization areas. And also, some between the Bureau and the Department of Interior. And I can understand that because as I say the new administration in Washington in the White House was insisting on different ways of looking at things. And Interior, Secretary of Interior's Office had to, I guess, enforce those. Jim Wyatt, James Wyatt, James Watt was Secretary of Interior at that time. I was in meetings a couple of times that he was conducting and, of course, you didn't say anything because old Jim Watts he ran the meetings. But I thought he was pretty arrogant. And I didn't think he knew sic em about natural resources period or administrating natural resource lands. But we did quite a bit of work in the divisions back there. Burt Silcock was the Director for a while, for a very short time, and then I think he, I'm not sure what he did, whether he retired or what. But George Turcott then became the Director of BLM. And Turk and I had gone to school together at the University of Montana. And we knew each other quite well. And we had similar backgrounds. And so, we got on quite well. And the main assignment that I had in the Division of Watershed Management was to put together a program for watershed, soil, and watershed management. There'd never been really a specific detailed set of instructions for the field offices to follow and to build into the administration of the public lands. One of the persons, in fact the main person that I worked with and was in the Division of Watershed was Ron Coleman, an outstanding young man, very, very sharp, very intelligent. He was able to put together a lot of information, a lot of ideas because at the same time that he was doing this, he was also working with on kind of a part-time assignment with the Geological Survey in developing new technology on surveillance, not surveillance I suppose. It

amounts to that really but inventorying resources that were under the surface of the ground, new technology. And, of course, he could not discuss that openly because it was, I don't know. It had some surveillance capabilities, and it was with the people in the government, I presume the CIA and those. And so, he was absolutely required to remain silent about that. But I know that it had an impact on the technology that he built into describing and managing the soil and the water resources of public lands. I'm real pleased and proud to have known him and worked with him and to have had him doing this because it would have been real tough to do anything near as good as he did without somebody like him and with his special technological knowledge. As I understand it now, they've rearranged the, remodeled and adjusted the organization back there, BLM's organization. There is no longer a soil and watershed division, a range division. As I understand it, they have combined them into a natural resources management division. And that's probably not too bad an idea. And particularly with the way things are looked at these days, I think maybe it's overdue really to get our organization, the managers, put together in the same way that the public looks at how they would like to see the public lands managed. So, I don't have any objection to that method of looking at the public lands and administering them. Actually, I spent 2 years in that operation. And that kind of summarizes what I did there as the Chief of Watershed Management. Can we take a break?

CECIL: We'll be off the tape for a moment.

CECIL: We were right at the end of side 4 of the tape of oral interview with Euel Davis. We're back on now beginning tape side 5. Euel had just told us about his experience in the Washington Office as Chief of the Division of Watershed and we're prepared to go on from there.

EUEL: Okay. That pretty well wraps up my tour in Washington because the last couple of months of my tour there I was in very close daily contact with people in the Department of Interior regarding an overseas assignment.

CECIL: Was this something that you sought out?

EUEL: No. No, in fact, I don't know how it got to the Department of the Interior but again, maybe they were trying to get rid of me in BLM. But somebody from Interior called and said, are you at all interested in this kind of stuff? I said, sure I'm interested in checking on anything. I was getting pretty upset with working back in Washington at that time under Jimmy Carter's reign because I thought things were deteriorating in the programs. And I wasn't alone in that. But, anyways, I was called by a representative in Interior if I could come up. And I talked to Turk about this, and he said, yeah, go ahead and talk to them if you're interested.

So, I went up there and they described the program to me; it was to be in Saudi Arabia. And it would be a 2-year assignment. There were also other people that were interested. And some of them were accepted and I was accepted. I was to be the head of the Natural Resources Division of what is known as JECOR. J E C O R. It means the Joint Economic Commission of Riyadh. Riyadh is the capitol of Saudi Arabia. It's right in the middle of it in the interior. So, I was to be the Chief or the leader of the Natural Resources Division.

After getting selected for that, we spent about a month getting some training on how to cope with things in foreign countries and particularly in Saudi Arabia. We got a small amount of exposure to the language. It's a very difficult language. It's a guttural language, has some similarities in that regard to German. For example, the King Khalid is **Hhalid**. And how you would transcribe that on a tape, I don't know. But it's a deep, throaty expression. Many of their words are that way. But we got very little of that. Mostly we got training in the formalities of dealing with Saudis. It's not Sodi, it's Saudi. S A U D I, Saudi, Arabia, and they're very insistent that it be said that way. One of the things that I recall very particularly is I frequently, still do, when I sit in a chair, I cross my legs, one leg over the other and the feet dangling. That is absolutely verboten. Not acceptable in Saudi Arabia. Why? Because the bottom of your foot and over there it's barefoot usually, a pair of sandals that they take off when they're inside, it's a barefoot looking right into their face and that's an insult. So, you don't do that. And we were

drilled on that particular thing. That's probably the most important thing that they talked to us about.

Well, anyways, about a month later, it was in December of 1975, that I took off and flew -- it seemed like forever. We had to stop in Germany and catch a Saudia Airlines plane that flew into Dhahran which is right next to Kuwait which is right next to Iraq. Anyways, we had to do that because no foreign planes were permitted to fly over or land in Saudi Arabia. And we landed then at Dhahran, and we had to disembark, and they checked all of our passports. And, my goodness, they checked all of the luggage. And then we got on another Saudia plane and flew to Riyadh which is about 450 kilometers from Dhahran.

CECIL: Did your wife accompany you on this?

EUEL: Not at that time. I had to go over and find a place to live and get kind of settled. And women are, in some respects, second rate citizens there. In other respects, they're the leaders and I'll get into that in a minute. But I was there for about a month. There had been a group of Americans that came on earlier and set up the JECOR program, the total program, which ultimately amounted to about 250 expatriates. Not all Americans, quite a few English people that had been there before. Quite a few Indians from India. Quite a few Lebanese, oddly enough Christian Arabs, Lebanese, and many of them. I was there about a month and my wife was permitted then to come in. She flew on a Saudia Airlines into Jeddah which is on the Red Sea and just a short distance north of Mecca which is one of their holy cities.

Mecca and Medina are the two holy cities there. You cannot go into those cities unless you are of the Islamic faith. They have roads that go around them. You can't go in there and they check you out because they're for Islamic people only. I did not get to fly down from Riyadh. But she was met by one of the U.S. Embassy people and was really happy about that because the airport was just full of Arab people. It was at the time of Ramadan, and they went to Mecca for the holy month; it was just full of people, women and kids, sitting on the floor, sleeping on the floor, having little charcoal burners, cooking their meals right in the airport on the floor. To get through, they

had to step over people that were sleeping. So, she was really dumbfounded and if it hadn't been for that person from the U.S. Embassy, she said she would have turned around and gone back. There had been quite a few people who had done just that. Couldn't hack it for even a day. They got back on the airplane and shoved off. We had some that did that in Riyadh in our program. But anyways, she arrived in Riyadh and I picked her up and I had just been able to find a small kind of an apartment right next to the JECOR office which was fortunate because we were able to either eat meals at a little lunch counter that they had set up there in the office or there was this little kitchen in our unit that we could cook our own meals. But until we got squared away and got to understand where you could buy food and what kind of food, it took a while to get used to that.

CECIL: Were there any other BLM people on assignment in the office at that time?

EUEL: Right. George {****Gerr(?)**} came in just a couple of weeks later. And he did not bring his wife over at that time. So, he was kind of a bachelor, had a bachelor apartment right next to the office. And it was maintained and everything by the service company that we had for JECOR. It was an American company from the West Coast. I can't remember the name of it. But it was an extremely large company, did this all over the world. And they took care of all of our needs, helped us out, remodeled the houses that we ultimately moved into.

George Gerr and then there was another young man that came in sometime later. He was an economist. I cannot remember his name. Anyways, the three of us from BLM and about 250 other expatriates. There was our group in resource management and that's a different story over there compared to here -- although there are quite a few similarities. There was one in economic expansion and development, one team of those. There was a team in census taking of the Saudi people which was a major program cause nobody knew at that time how many Saudis there were. There were so many Bedouins. And the Bedouins, of course, they are mobile, they move around all the time. They're not associated with any city or town or village. They even move into Riyadh.

We had some Bedouin communities there. Incredible. The head is a sheik and several wives frequently, lots of kids. They put up their own houses which is a big black tent made out of camel hair and goat hair woven. And it will cover 1,300 to 2,000 square feet, one tent partitioned off inside for the women and the children, and the men, the adult males.

It's pretty interesting to go into those places. You don't go in unless you're invited but if you're out in the desert area and you come up to one of those homes and the first person you meet is the head of the tribe, I guess you'd call it, not a tribe but a little community, the sheik. You get into a very, very congenial atmosphere. You immediately sit down. They bring out one of these woolen Arabic rugs, carpets, throw it all on the sand. You sit down on that. You fold your legs underneath you. And you're served tea, they call it "chai." Or "Qahwa." It's got this guttural sound again, Qahwa. It's their coffee. It's not really coffee, it's ground cumin seed. Looks kind of like lemon juice. It has a very different taste. If you've ever had cumin in different food recipes, you can realize. In the official government offices where I worked in Riyadh, they had an official "Qahwa" server; he would come in with these big Arabic coffee pots. They're made out of either tin or copper and then if they're made out of copper, they're usually decorated with a lot of scribing and then they are covered with a layer of molten silver so there's a different color situation. Usually out in the Bedouin areas out in the desert, they heat them only on charcoal fire pits cause that's all they have. They don't have anything else. There's no wood to speak of and there's no gas there. There may be now because there's enormous quantities of propane and natural gas. In the official government office, a Qahwa or chai server gets these big containers that will hold probably close to a 1/2 gallon of liquid. And he has a little cup that's about the size of whiskey shot glass, maybe a little bit larger but not much, and he stands there and holds that cup in front of you and he pours this chai or Qahwa in from about 2 feet up and he never misses a drop in those little containers. In fact, I was really surprised because I was told by one of the expatriates that worked in the Ministry of Agriculture and Water that the chai and Qahwa servers were paid more than the interpreters in the Ministry. They got a higher pay cause they were qualified people, and they really knew it. And it's true.

CECIL: Skilled labor.

EUEL: Right, skilled labor, unbelievable. But anyways, getting back then to living there, we moved into a house all made out of rocks and cinder blocks I guess that they had brought in. An amazing thing to me was that at that time, they were not able to use any of the desert sand in construction work. They could use it for kind of a covering over the houses but anything that had weight bearing loads it could not be used. That desert sand was so fine from blowing and blowing for centuries and centuries that it was not secure. They could not keep a building up. It would disintegrate, fall apart. So, they had to import sand from out of the country. That just blew my mind. Here's Saudi Arabia. It's got a gazillion square miles of sand, and they had to import it. Well, I don't know whether they've rectified that program or not but at least it was amazing to me.

We got into this house and at that time, they did not have toilets like we're used to. They had water. The way they did it is they would have a big cistern on the ground and with a pump, gasoline generated, they would pump it up to the top of the building where there was another big cistern. So that you could have hot water for bathing and later on for the toilet setup. For drinking water, we had treated water from a Coca-Cola plant. We had big 5-gallon containers like we have here. That's what we got immediately. The first thing we got cause you don't drink the city water there. I'll say a little bit more about that later.

But anyways, we moved into this house and the traditional toilets that are inside of a house, that was for the Royal family and people with a little bit more wealth than the average Bedouin is a hole in the floor. And then on the side, at least when we were there, water that came down from the water container on the roof, the big cistern. And then you could flush your bodily waste down that hole. But, you know, the Americans didn't like that. So, our service company put in toilets. And their labor over there was almost entirely Yemens because the Saudis do not do, or didn't at that time, manual labor. They hired foreigners, Yemens, south Yemens, north Yemens, Chinese later on, a lot of Chinese. But the Yemens came in and put those toilets in. They didn't understand how they

worked because one of the Yemens, he was used to squatting down over a hole without the anchor ring on it, he got up on the rim there on his feet to use the toilet. And it fell over with him, and it, and water came all over from up above. It was just really incredible. They learned real quickly but they had never seen a toilet before.

Then we got refrigerators and electricity. They put us in a gasoline powered electrical generator. This was one of the first years that we were there. So, we got electricity so we could have a refrigerator. The Yemens (they're small, physically small, people, you know, compared to Americans. Five feet, five feet, four is a common height). They strapped this refrigerator on one guy, tied it on to him, and he leaned over, and that little guy picked that up and walked up three steps to get the refrigerator in the house. But he lifted that thing. I couldn't do it, and I must have weighed 75 or maybe 100 pounds more than he did. But anyways, they did all of that kind of work, the Yemens, all of the manual labor. At least initially when we were there.

Okay, electricity -- we had an air conditioner too, but it was one of these little portable type things and it only worked when the generator worked. And, of course, then they'd have to get over real quickly and give us some more fuel for the generator. And then finally the city of Riyadh built large electrical generators fueled by oil. They were fantastic when they worked, but they would break down. And you'd run out of power, and everything would spoil in your refrigerator, and the air conditioner didn't work. So, we would get into our car that had air conditioning, my wife and I, and drive and drive and drive for hours. Gas was free to us. We were given a brand new Chevrolet every year. No cost. The house didn't cost us anything. That was paid for by the Saudi government. In fact, I should say that everything in our project, all of our salaries, all our housing, all our travel, our cars, everything except our food; we had to buy that ourselves. But everything else was paid for by the Saudi government. Except the salary and expenses for the head of our JECOR Commission. He was paid for by the U.S. Department of Treasury. USDI provided us but the agreement for the entire project with the Saudis and the Department of Treasury. Department of Treasury had to pay for our leader, the Director of the Joint Commission so that he didn't have to back down if he felt that there was a critical

thing that had to be done. I can't recall that ever happened but at least that was the idea. Okay.

CECIL: What was your job there? What did you people do, Euel?

EUEL: Well, it was kind of interesting. A lot of work was directly with the Bedouin cause they were the ones that used the land aside from the oil companies. And we were not part of that program. That was a private operation called Aramco. Texaco was involved and another gas company. But anyways, they were a private operation with the Saudi government.

Our job in the Ministry of Agriculture and Water was to try to help improve the grazing situation, an almost impossible situation because they had done this their way for so many hundreds and hundreds, probably thousands, of years. And also, to do something about trying to stop the shifting of the sand dunes into the areas where people were living in homes, in towns. We did some of that work.

We helped start the planting of shrubs particularly in the area near Dhahran and Kuwait. The U.S. Government was heavily involved down there, the Navy and the Army, and the Air Force.

And there was a village of military people at Dhahran, beautiful homes they had put up for those people. All of our homes, all of the expatriate homes had 8-foot walls completing surrounding the house. Some of the homes had their own swimming pools. We didn't have one but there were enough around that we didn't need one.

We had a house for our maid, and we hired a young lady. In fact, she was the same age as my daughter. Beautiful young lady; not a Saudi. She came from Eritrea, which is part of the mountain area north of Ethiopia. She did keep us well fed and she did the shopping. And she knew how to speak Arabic, of course. Fantastic young lady. I tried to get her to come back with us and go to school over here in the U.S. She wanted to very badly. But her father wouldn't let her because she was making money for him to do nothing, to sit on his heels.

We did some erosion control or attempted to do it. It was pretty tough really. I mean you go out on some of those sand dunes that are a couple hundred feet high and what in the world can you do with them? Well, we tried, and we successfully planted a few shrubs. Several thousand, I suppose, but it didn't cover much area. We worked with the Bedouins on grazing, although they probably knew more about how to graze in the desert than we did. I wrote an article that I gave to a Society of Range Management session down in California some years back on grazing in Saudi Arabia. Very interesting. Camels and sheep and goats. Mostly camels and goats. The sheep they have are kind of a different breed of sheep. They're long tailed. They don't, the tail is not removed. But they make enough money doing that work and moving around. It's a lifestyle that they have used for so many centuries and they like it. And it's very difficult to get them to come in and settle in the villages.

I saw one sheik come in one day. I was down at a bank. The U.S. Embassy set up banking systems for us there in a local bank. I saw one of these sheiks come in and he had a sack as big as a two-bushel gunny sack. He opened it up and he just poured it out on the floor. It was a pile of rials. Rial is the Saudi monetary unit, and let's see, at that time and I think it's still about the same, it was 3.3 rials per U.S. dollar. We were able to send our money home through the bank, a regular kind of deposit system. We could send it to the bank in the U.S. and get interest on it which is interesting because so much of our everything that we needed was paid for that most of our salary could be saved and put into a savings account. There was a limit. Our salaries could not exceed the U.S. Ambassador's salary. And, of course, mine being a middle-level employee never did get near his. But I think at that time, it was about \$70,000 a year, the Ambassador's salary.

Oh, another thing that they did is every 2 years, they paid for a trip to come back to the U.S. and spend a month leave. Paid for round-trip airfare. And every year, you could take a month and go wherever you wanted, and we did a lot of traveling. We went to Iraq, to Iran. Fantastic. At that time, the Shah was still the head of Iran. You could buy liquor in Iran. You could buy pork and eat it. All of that, of course, was out of the question in Saudi Arabia. And it is now, of course, too in Iran.

Back to the work. These other things were so interesting that the work kind of pales in comparison. One of the areas that is not desert, there's several of them in Saudi Arabia, there are a lot of springs out in the desert. And there's a lot of date palms around those springs, also they plant small gardens in those areas. In addition to that, before we left, the Saudi government had set up water desalination plants at various places. One down in Jeddah right off the Red Sea and one in Riyadh, 450 kilometers from the Persian Gulf. They piped that saline water all the way into these desalination plants and set up a water system for the whole city. In fact, they had so much water that they made an irrigation system out in the sand and started raising wheat. And it would be so hot that the few cattle that they had (they finally started moving in cattle) would have to spray them all day long with a spray and underneath a shaded cover so that they wouldn't suffocate or get dehydrated.

But the area that I spent most of my time in was down in the southwestern part next to the Red Sea, and along what is known as the "Asir." It's a mountainous range A S I R. The Asir Mountain Range. It goes all along the Red Sea from the north, just across from Egypt, all the way down south, across the Red Sea is Ethiopia. And along the Asir Mountains is Taif. It's up just very close to Mecca, but it's up very high on a high escarpment. You can look down and probably 40 miles away is Mecca.

But up on this high escarpment the vegetation is entirely different than the desert. It's like the western slope of Colorado. Juniper trees, evergreen trees. A lot of them. Running water, streams, little creeks that we would call them here. Some of them have trout in them, not trout but small freshwater fish. A lot of wild animals, game, some leopards. There used to be quite a few but mostly killed off now. A lot of baboons.

One of the things that our group did was set up a national park. The first one that they had ever had in Saudi Arabia. I don't know whether they have more now or not, but it was up on top of the Asirs. Out of a little town, fantastic town, called Abha. A B H A. It was heavily grazed, of course. It's right close to North Yemen, so there are a lot of Yemen people there. And some Saudis that are Yemen-oriented, they do physical work, and they

had developed thousands of acres of terraced farms, little farms, a half an acre, an acre, an acre and a half, couple of acres, five acres at the most. Little terraces that they would irrigate because it rained quite a bit down there. They had this developed just like in China and they'd done it for hundreds of years.

Right above this terraced area is where we developed this national park, a two and one-half million acre park. Enormous thing. You could get up on top of the escarpment in the national park and look down to the Red Sea which is about 75 miles airline to the east, and it looked like some of our canyon areas here on the west slope, unbelievable area, very enjoyable.

CECIL: Where you set up this big park, was all the land government-owned to begin with or did you have to acquire it?

EUEL: All the land over there outside of the villages inside is government land. It belongs to the Saudis. They don't call it government land but that's what it is.

CECIL: Belongs to the King?

EUEL: The King, yeah. And he has the royal family. There's 3500 princes or were when we were there. The favorite sons are kind of the head sheiks of these enclaves wherever there's a village or town. And in Abha, there was a young man, had been educated here in the States (a good many of the people that I worked with were educated here, got Bachelor's, Master's, Ph.D.) outstanding, very, very capable young people. If there was any feuding with the people that they worked with, the Bedouin or the local inhabitants, I never heard of it.

You'd go in to one of these meetings, and the young man would be sitting there, the Prince, the head man, would be sitting there with a couple of falcons sitting on his arm and one maybe on his knee. That's a favorite pastime of theirs is falconing. And, of course, the "chai" servers and the "Qahwa" servers were always there. The room or tent have a lot of big carpets. They'd pour you some of this tea. It was not strained so there

was a lot of tea leaves in it. And they would tell you when you're through to throw the tea leaves on the carpet because that helps clean them. That's what they said. I can't believe it, but they did it. So, we did. They didn't have vacuum cleaners at that time. But they'd take them outside and beat them with a stick and get the dust and everything out. The Yemens would that is.

We did quite a bit of working with those people that had these little terraced farms. They did not cut many of the trees there, although there were some areas that they cut quite a bit and made charcoal out of them to sell to the Bedouins out in the desert because otherwise the Bedouins just didn't have anything for heating.

Below Abha, just to the south of it a few miles, maybe 30 kilometers, there was a big place they called Khamis Mushait and it was a big military operation. And that's where the first U.S. airplane that had the big radar put on top, looked like an umbrella.

CECIL: The AWACS?

EUEL: AWACS. The first ones that were used anywhere to my knowledge in the world started out of there. You know, with the Saudis' approval. But another direction, a little bit further to the southwest, we went down to a place called Gizan, right on the Red Sea, right down on the Red Sea. And there were a lot of streams running out down into the Red Sea. The U.S. Corps of Engineers and some of our people set up dams so they could use them for irrigation purposes.

Before that happened, the U.S. Geological Survey was trying to get fresh water, potable water, for the inhabitants of Gizan which is kind of a port, little port area on the Red Sea. They had drilled wells, or drilled holes, I should say well over a thousand feet. I heard of one over 2500 feet. And there was nothing at that depth but solid salt. So, they gave up and that's when we started building these dams and trying to get potable water.

CECIL: Let me interrupt, Euel. We're about to the end of the

tape. We'll take a short break and turn the tape over.

EUEL: Okay.

CECIL: We're back on the tape, continuing the interview with Euel Davis.

EUEL: Okay. A couple more things about Saudi Arabia. Further south on the Asir Mountains, right on the top, overlooking the Red Sea area, we ran into a lot of carvings and writings on the big rocks up there. And we talked to the local sheik about that. He said the history according to them was that these figures and shapes and carvings in the rocks were done by the people that had moved Queen Cleopatra from the Cairo area down on a camel journey, many of them, down into Oman which is on the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula. And this was to get incense and myrrh. They would carry back great quantities of that, and they said that she (Queen Cleopatra) had been on one of those journeys. We were able to buy that stuff, very reasonable, in the souks, the little stores there in Saudi Arabia. So, that's where it comes from. That's one of the places. I'm sure there are probably others. But that was a big think, selling frankincense and myrrh. And we brought some home when we came back. Well, there are a lot of other things that I could mention about Saudi Arabia.

CECIL: Do you think your work there with the Natural Resources had lasting change, Euel?

EUEL: Not mine. I don't think that I was there long enough. Perhaps. The operation is still going on incidentally, this JECOR. One of my secretaries, a young lady from Wales, a citizen of the United Kingdom or British, married a young man from South Africa; she's still there. I hear from her all the time. And she tells some pretty weird stories about what went on during the Desert Storm war and everything. Gee, there's a lot of things. The big desert, the big, big desert. It's the second largest one in the world, the Rub' al Khali. The "Empty Quarter" as it's locally known. A desert larger than Texas and

New Mexico and all of those put together. And it's second only to the desert in China, what is the big desert?

CECIL: The Gobi?

EUEL: The Gobi Desert. It's second to that in size. My wife and I, several times, drove to Dhahran and one day we stopped off just before getting into Dhahran. I'd been told that there were diamonds, desert diamonds, out in the desert. And what they are is quartz, chunks of quartz. We stopped and we found several of them that were big as a pecan. And so, we sent them to Germany and had them cut and polished like a diamond. They were magnificent. I suppose that there would be 50, 60 carats or more cause they'd be as big as your thumb nail after they were cut and polished. They were locally called "Kisumu" diamonds. I gave them to my daughter. I don't know what she did with them.

But also, in the sands just outside of Kuwait. (I never got into the city of Kuwait, into Kuwait itself.) The land area, there is a big desert. And in that, we ran into sandstone. It looked like sandstone. I don't know how to say it. Relics, it looked like somehow the sand was congealed or cemented together. I mean, thousands, thousands of pieces of this stuff, strewn over hundreds of acres. And I picked up some that were formed, and they were probably the size of the palm of your hand that were in the shape of a heart or in kind of a point shape. I gave those to my daughter, too. But that was a common occurrence to go out and find these things.

Just outside of Riyadh, there was an enormous area of petrified wood. And some of those logs of petrified wood were 30 inches in diameter. I mean humongous things. And it was scattered over many, many acres. Now, I brought back a bunch of those. Very, very special pieces. It looked like this area (how many million years ago, I don't know) had burned and some of this and charred it and melted some of it. I don't even know what species it was, but I'm sure it could be determined. But I brought back several chunks and they're real nice curios and remembrances.

Well, after we had been there the two years, I came back to the

States to see our family. My wife had to go back early. She was a schoolteacher there in Riyadh. She taught a lot of the other expatriates' children. Incidentally, she had 27 different nationalities in her classes. And those kids were picking up English like you wouldn't believe. We came back to the States on leave, and I had to spend some time with the people in the Department of Interior here in Washington, DC.

And while I was back in DC, and I had a heart attack. And after I got out of the hospital there in DC, I stayed at Tom Hayden's house. A month later I asked the doctor, can I go back to Saudi Arabia? He said, do whatever you want, just, you know, be cool. Over there, be cool. But anyways, I took off. And my mother-in-law.

CECIL: This is a second 2-year assignment?

EUEL: Yeah. We went back for another 2-year assignment. My mother-in-law, she wanted to go over, and she did. She went back with me at that time. And we spent another 2 years there doing about the same thing.

One of our trips while we were there was over into Egypt, went to Cairo, up the Nile River, to the Aswan Dam. We went down into the tombs, the pyramids, the whole works. A fantastic area. They speak Arabic there, too, of course, but it's a little bit different. In Arabia, one of the big things you've got to get comfortable with is baksheesh which is kind of like grease over here. It's a tip before you get something done. And I got familiar with that in Las Vegas, Nevada. Everything of any significance that you wanted done at that time was you had to grease the palm of whoever could do it. Over there, it's called "baksheesh." I ran into another term associated with that in Egypt, it's called "rashwah." Bad, bad. It's a bribe. And anybody that even says rashwah better have something to back it up.

When we went up the Aswan Dam, we had hotel reservations. Got up there, nothing. I didn't offer them anything because I was going to give a tip at the end of the tour. The hotel clerk says, you have to pay twice as much for the rooms. We had to have them, so we did. Went back down to Cairo and I went into

the place where I had gotten the tour tickets and told the guy. I said rashwah. And he said, RASHWAY!! He nearly went out of the roof. They gave me all of the money back for our tour. So, rashwah is a bad thing. This was several hundred dollars, you know. And over there, that was big time.

After four years, we returned to the States. I spent about a month in Washington, DC. Of course, things had changed enormously in that 4-year period. And the people, I don't think my job even existed anymore as Chief of the Watershed Division. I think it had been consolidated with the range department then. And Kay Wilkes was the head man of that. So, they told me would I be willing to transfer, go out to Denver, and work in the State Office for 6 months and then retire. And they would pay everything, take care of all my moving expenses. And I'd had enough of Washington, so I said yeah. So, I came out here.

CECIL: You got a benchmark on time, when this was, Euel?

EUEL: Let's see. It was in 1980.

CECIL: 1980?

EUEL: Right. 1980, I transferred out here in the spring and into the State Office. And I just had kind of a keep occupied job. And one of the things that I did while I was here, I don't know as it's ever been used for any reasonable purpose or anything. Dale Andrus was the State Director at the time. Well, you were here too. Yeah. About the only thing that I can recall doing was going out into the Craig area. They were having flood problems out there on the Yampa River. And I developed a map showing the watershed from that area that would contribute to floods. I don't know what else I did except maybe get into arguments with some of the local BLM personnel.

So, I retired in January of 1980. And then spent a couple of years here in Denver working for a wood company, Centennial Wood; still in existence, sells hardwood, prime, high-quality hardwoods. And then I got a call from a company in Washington, DC, called Lewis Berger, Incorporated. I had run into some of

their people while I was in Saudi Arabia, and they asked me if I was interested in working in Kenya. I said, well, I'll sure talk about it. So, they told me I had to get an examination cause they knew that I'd had this heart attack. So, I got the examination; everything was fine. They paid my way back to DC to talk and discuss the terms and everything. And as a result, I joined them and in 1982 went to Kenya. And I worked for this private company, but it was paid for by USAID. United States Agriculture International Development. And that was a real nice assignment. I arrived there, again, ahead of my wife; she came over about 6 months later. I'd found a place, a nice place. Had guards all the time because there was a lot of problems in Kenya. They had had this experience of the Mau Mau Rebellion. And there were a lot of robberies going on. Every store in the main part of Nairobi had armed guards, big barbed wire fences around all of the buildings down there. There were three houses in our little compound, all very nice homes, great big acacia trees in the area. And we had guards at the gate going into our compound, 24-hour a day guards. Just the night that my wife arrived, I met her at the airport, went downtown, had a nice dinner, came back to our house, and got a telephone call about 2 o'clock in the morning from a friend of mine that was working in our project over there, asking me if I could hear the shooting. And over the telephone, I could. And he said, there's a war going on down here. He lived right close down to town.

And that's when the attempted overthrow started down there. So, for the first month that she was there, we were almost boarded into our little compound. We'd go to work once in a while when we could or go to some close little store and buy some food. But right outside of the gate of our compound, there was the military, the Kenyan military, had set up a machine gun post. And they had guys there all the time. And they searched our car every time we came in and went out, you know. I had a little Volkswagen beetle, a bug, they called it beetle over there. And they'd look underneath it. And, of course, the underside has complete metal shielding under there. And they'd check that and pound it with sticks. It was really amazing.

CECIL: What was your job there? What were you there to do?

EUEL: Well, kind of similar to the job in Saudi Arabia. I

worked with a much, much better organized and much better trained group of young Kenyans. Everybody spoke English there, completely. They spoke Swahili too but everything we did was discussed in English. There was a lot of work done there in grazing management. Up near Mount Kenya, which is about 230 kilometers from Nairobi, we spent a lot of time in the field camping out, sleeping out, staying in some of the native compounds and working with the people there on grazing.

One of the problems there is the population increase in Kenya, which was the highest in the world, may still be. Ten percent increase each year. And they weren't producing enough food. So, we had to get into the agriculture business. And also, we had to somehow try to keep them from trying to grow crops on a lot of the area that was not crop land. It was strictly grazing land. What they did was they would burn it off; burn all those shrubs and trees off and then plant crops on it. And within two years, move and go to a new place because the soil was a red clay type soil, very low fertility and it could not support crops more than a couple of years. And we had to work with them and try to define areas where they could plant crops, mostly a form of corn, a white corn (maize). They would not use the yellow corn because an old medicine man told them that it would make them infertile. They wouldn't have children. And I thought that was the best solution we could have had. But they would not eat that yellow corn, had to be white corn. Tasted the same to me. But anyways, we worked with them on that.

Most of the people that did the grazing were of the Maasai tribe. A very interesting group of people, warrior type. Still capable of conducting violence. We'd see them out in the field, talk to them -- a little dam that we had built to conserve water for livestock, a watering dam, and here comes Maasai with a band of goats. A few camels up in the northern part up near Lake Tanganyika. But mostly goats. Real tall slender man, just a loin cloth thrown across his shoulder usually hiding his privates, but not all the time and didn't make any difference to them. And walking along with a spear because there were lions there. And they'd have to keep those lions away from their herds. I don't think there's much of a problem like that now because by the time I left there 2 years later, the lions had been pretty well controlled by hunters. And, of course, it's not permitted anymore unless you got to somebody that will let

you have a permit. Daniel arap Moi or was it Kenyatta's wife? They guy that headed up Kenya. The native person that headed up the government after the Mau Mau Revolution was over, his wife was in cahoots with the people that were trying to get ivory. You know, the ivory hunters. And she would help sell them. And so, you know, they finally some of the locals and with a lot of help from the Leakey's, the Brits that had been there for many, many generations. But Richard Leakey, he was very, very interested in keeping the environment the way it was. And he became the government's head man in their wildlife department. He set up teams of people that would go out and hunt the poachers, the ivory poachers and the persons that would shoot without a permit all the game animals. Well, Kenya was a great place. We worked again with the Maasai and with the Kakaku who were the farm type people. Excellent relationships with them.

One of the closest friends that I have anywhere is a Kenyan; his father was a Maasai, and his mother was a Kuku. And he's been over here and got his B.S. and Master's and Ph.D. in California at the University of California on a scholarship. He has been back over here again on a Rhodes scholarship at the University of Colorado in Boulder. I've had him come over and he and his wife spent time with me here.

He had a bunch of little kids when we were in Kenya. Later, when we were in Somalia, we'd come over to Nairobi and spend a week or so in Nairobi at the Hilton Hotel just to get out of Somalia. He'd come down to see us. They'd come in the door and those little kids would run over, and say, hi, grandpa, and grab me and hug me. Unbelievable family. I'm telling you, I thought that they were the greatest thing. Enjoyed it immensely.

Going out in the bush, working with those people. We had to be careful. You get farther north into the north country up towards Lake Tanganyika and there were a lot of bandits out there. So, we didn't drive around without a military security support. They always were available to do that for us. Because we had Kenyan counterparts that were working right with us all the time. Staying in some of those old kind of a tourist motels that the Brits had built years and years ago before the Mau Mau Revolution. They were still open and run by some Brits. Go in there and be sure you got there at 4 o'clock for "teatime," tea and scones, you know, it was really great. Well, I could go on

and on about Kenya. Spent two years there, came back to the States in 1984. Got a call from Lewis Berger, said would you go to Somalia? In fact, they did that (before I left Kenya). Would I be interested in going to Somalia for 2 years? Kay Wilkes had been over there for about a year then. He came to Nairobi, and he was telling me all about Somalia, good things, and the bad things. So, I said, yeah, I'd like to do that. They said we'll pay your way there to fly over to Mogadishu from Nairobi. It was only an hour's flight. You can have look and make up your mind then. While we were still in Kenya, my granddaughter had come over from the States. She's back here, lives in Denver. But she, of course, wanted to go to Somalia with us. So, all three of us flew over there and we stayed with Pat and Kay Wilkes. In Mogadishu for one week. They took us down on the weekend to the Indian Ocean. Mogadishu is right on the Indian Ocean. The airport is within a quarter of a mile of the Indian Ocean and runs parallel with the Indian Ocean and the Sand Dunes. And we decided to go.

So, came back to the States to kind of reorganize things. My household goods, I shipped most of them from the DC area out here to Denver. A lot of the things that I had purchased in Kenya were shipped here. Some magnificent rugs that were hand woven from Kenyan sheep. Natural colors in this rug. But they used, made their own dyes from local herbs and plants. They were shipped in. Had to have them checked out. Fortunately, the company shipped all of that stuff for me. (Even when I left Saudi Arabia, for example, they shipped home a Mercedes Benz that was purchased over there. All of this was paid for by the Saudi government. So, you know, we enjoyed that). But anyways, we moved then to Mogadishu in 1985. And we worked there for Lewis Berger but under the auspices of the World Bank. It was very interesting, but a little bit testy at times because tribal problems were beginning way back then. They had been going on, I suppose, for some time. Just before I arrived there, one of our people, an American, working in an engineering division for drilling wells, water wells for the Somalis, he was sleeping in his tent in the afternoon. Very hot there like it was in most desert countries. It was on a Friday. And in the Islamic countries, Friday is the holy day. (Mogadishu is not too far from Ethiopia and a lot of our work was done up along there. And the well that they were drilling was up near the Ethiopian border. A lot of the people that roamed around the country out there had somehow acquired these AK-47's from the people during

the fighting in Ethiopia. It was still going on, incidentally). And this guy came in and our engineer was sleeping in his tent and this guy sprayed with AK-47. Of course, it killed him. The Somalia government really got upset about this, as well as the U.S. Government. And they sent out a team of Somali military and they harassed that village. They killed all of the camels that those people had in the village until they owned up and gave up the guy that had done the shooting. He was an Islamic freak, you know, didn't want any foreigners in his country. So, they killed him.

So that kind of made us think a little bit about how we went out into the bush. And I mean that.

A lot more bush there than there was in Saudi Arabia. A lot more vegetation in some places, more running water in some places. But a lot of sand dunes along the Red Sea. And there's where we spent probably most of our time trying to control the spread of the sand dunes. A thousand miles of it right along the Red Sea. Fantastic area. Nobody there except for a few Somalians. You could go swimming anytime you wanted to except there were a lot of sharks there. Right off the coast.

Down in this area right out of Mogadishu where we went when I took my granddaughter and wife over there. The U.S. Embassy had set up a little cottage right on the coast where you could go in and take a picnic lunch out there. But they warned you - don't go in over your ankles in the water. And people did. And people got bit. And they got their legs cut off. I mean, bitten off by those sharks. A shark that's 3 feet long can ruin you. And there were big ones there. And the natives, the native Somalis right in Mogadishu right at the docks on the wharfs, they had a slaughterhouse and they would throw the remains of animals that they had butchered and the blood and everything right into the water and the sharks were just in mass there. They probably killed 25 or 30 kids every year down there. You know, wading around in the water, looking for clams or oysters or what have you. But anyways, we spent most of our time in trying to moderate the increase of sand dunes, the size of sand dunes. The grazing, we put in a lot of water or wind breaks we called them. Actually, they were to stop the sand. But they were all of brush, thorn bush. We'd plant these seedlings, had a nursery that was developed over in the mountainous area a bit away from the coast. And would plant

these little shrubs in there and then put up a fence to keep the livestock out, mostly camels and sheep, a few cows, the brahma breed, of course. And we'd put up these fences made of thorn bushes. And it was really amazing how those people would be able to get in there and work with that thorny brush and put up, make fences out of it, long fences, little enclosures of shrubs along those sand dunes, oh quarter of a mile long and then jump another quarter of a mile and maybe a couple of hundred yards wide.

CECIL: Was this planting effective?

EUEL: Yes.

CECIL: Did it do the job?

EUEL: Well, I guess it did. You know, I was only there 2 years, so I really don't know how long. One of the reasons why I think they lived is because even though right on the coast, you'd think there's nothing underneath that sand but salt water, there's a lot of fresh water. And that's why our engineers were there drilling wells, freshwater wells. Because until they could get a well or a source of potable water, they would have to rely on ponds that would fill up when the rainy season came. And there was quite a rainy season in Somalia, torrential rains. And in those ponds, of course, the livestock would wade around drinking and all of their offal would be in there and their body wastes. The local people used that for their drinking water. We'd go out in the bush, and they'd invite us in for a cup of tea. I'll be damned. I wouldn't have their cup of tea unless I saw it boiling and boiling and boiling.

But anyways, they would dig wells, and they would do a lot of it by hand, the local Somalis. And they would dig it right down through the sand. They'd start with a big hole, and they'd put a big log over the hole and run a rope over it and put a couple of kids on the end of that rope. I don't know how old they were, but it looked to me like they were, you know, like 10 or 11 years old. Send them down there and send the bucket down and they would shovel that bucket full of sand. They'd pull it up,

dump it, and down it would go. And, by golly, they'd get water. Beautiful water down there, maybe 75 feet deep. And this is within a half a mile of the ocean front. Well, I never saw any of those wells cave in but I'm sure it happened. But they were deep wells. And it was good, fresh water. But our engineers were doing a lot to drill wells and make potable water available. And they were successful at that.

Well, going on with this, after a couple of years, it was my time to leave. And I had to write a termination report. And I could see the violence coming in that country because the different clans were at each other's throats then. And I wrote in my termination report some recommendations that I thought would help them. And we carried out some of them earlier, but I thought they ought to be expanded. And that was to send a lot more students to the U.S. for education. And I made the point very clearly that I thought if some improvements were not made immediately, that they were going to have a major disaster in Somalia, as, of course, they did. I was afraid to present this to the head man, the head of the range center there, because he was one of these tribal people. Another young man that I worked with very closely, had been educated here in the States and so I said, I'll get my report and give it to you, and you can give it to the head man. And he said, okay. And so, I did that. I gave it to him while I was at the airport leaving because it contained enough stuff that I was pretty sure that the head man would have really raised Cain with me.

I just want to make one more comment regarding the matter. In the Range Center where I worked in Somalia, Mogadishu, they had a water tower that they pumped water into. It was, oh, probably, 10,000 or 15,000 gallon water tank up high on a big platform. The water ran into the building for the toilets primarily. The work there had all been done by Chinese. And they just had a hole in the floor with a valve to flush down the body waste. The Chinese valve turns counterclockwise instead of clockwise to turn it off. And one morning I came to work, and my office was up on the top floor, three floors up, and coming down the stairway climbing up there, there was a river of water running down the steps. And I got up there, waded through that water and went into the toilet and sure enough the girls that cleaned were used to the clockwise turn off valves. And instead, they had turned it on, left it on and it flooded everything all the way down. Those kinds of things, those

little instances happened all the time.

We had people jump over our fence at home, a wall 8-foot high (we had a guard there, too, of course, 24 hours a day) to try to steal things. Our guard would run them off.

Right across the street, a Somali guy with a lot of money (he was into foreign commerce) thieves broke into his house and took gold jewelry off of his wife's hands and then shot her right there. The local cops caught those guys and shot them, too. But, I mean, these kind of things happened all the time. All the time.

In all of the countries where you have the different religions, I became very, very interested in the way those people followed their religions. In Kenya, it was mostly Christians. Now, down along the coast, down near Mombasa, there were a lot of Muslims. But, mostly Christians, a lot of Christian churches there. In Somalia, almost entirely Muslims. They're very, very, very religious. They have five prayers a day. And so, I became very interested.

In 1986, I returned to the U.S. and retired for good. And that's about the size of it.

CECIL: And you're now a gentleman of leisure?

EUEL: Well, in fact, I do more work now than I did before, I think, sometimes. But I do it much slower.

CECIL: Well, that's quite a story, Euel. A career in resource management that covered three different continents or parts of three different continents and nearly 40 years.

EUEL: Oh, geez, yeah. I never thought of it that way. It is that long, isn't it?

CECIL: Yeah.

EUEL: My goodness.

CECIL: Well, that's a good story.

EUEL: Well, I don't know as I would want to do it over at this time. But if it were back when I started, I'd want to do it over again, too. But things have changed so much all over the world and in this country, in this state, and all those other countries, so many things have changed. And it's hard enough to adjust to the changes here in Denver. My God.

CECIL: Denver's changed along with all of them.

EUEL: I guess that's true.

TAPE ENDED